SHADOW OF THE LONG KNIVES

A NOVEL

BY

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TO

THE EARLY SETTLERS OF OHIO

PARTICULARLY THE ROHNS, THE LANDISES,
THE DUNBARS, THE HILLIARDS
AND WOODWARDS

SHADOW OF
THE LONG KNIVES

EXTENSION

SHADOW OF THE LONG KNIVES

I

DOWN to the left swirled the shining river, its steep green banks overhung with wide-branched limbs of trees which fringed the immeasurable forest, a tangle of great trunks, saplings, underbrush, and vines that spread illimitably. A little distance from the water's edge, and following the southerly flowing current, Angus McDermott walked at a swift but softly moving pace. He carried a powder-horn and a pouch of shot, each slung over a shoulder of his buckskin shirt. There was an awkwardly long musket gripped in his right hand, but it did not hinder him in his quiet, agile movements as he twisted his way through the brush and brambles that barred his scantily marked path.

His light-blue eyes looked neither to right nor left, yet he was aware of the rippling of the river, the trembling of a branch as a bird took flight, and of rustling along the ground where an unseen snake slithered away from his approach. Though he had been walking for three days he felt no weariness. He had been sent out in advance of Lord Dunmore's army to find Major Pike, who was supposed to be on the west bank of the Ohio opposite the mouth of the Kanawha. The main body of the troops, under command of Lord Dunmore, the last British governor of Virginia, were paddling down the Ohio in pirogues, but Pike had gone ahead with a large detachment. At the Kanawha's mouth they were to meet and take up warfare with the Indians.

Having been driven from their own territory and, after taking up new abodes, finding white settlers still

encroaching, Shawanese and Mingoes had made several sallies into Virginia settlements, which they had converted into scenes of desolation: of charred log cabins, trampled fields, and unburied bodies of all who failed to escape or refused to surrender. And Dunmore, as governor of the colony whose expansion the Indians had interrupted, had decided to break the stubbornness of this race with actions as ruthless as their own. With many volunteer frontiersmen to augment his own colonial troops he had split his army, sending the smaller part afoot some days before he set out by water. Major Pike had been charged to fight in no large engagements, but to observe the movements of the Indians as he pushed south toward the mouth of the Kanawha, the probable field on which the tribes would be encountered.

McDermott reached the point of meeting before noon. But Major Pike was not there. He walked up on the promontory where the hollow oak tree stood and felt carefully inside the bole for the message Major Pike was to have left if he had already come and gone. There was no message either. He sat down to wait.

Midday sun penetrated into the green-boughed forest, diffusing its brilliant light beneath the shade. McDermott leaned back, balancing his musket across his knees. But a moment later his jaw tightened and his eyes quickly narrowed. For from the trail ahead came the sound of a snapping twig. Softly he arose and stood concealed behind the trunk of a maple. There were heavy footsteps on the moist dead leaves which had covered the trail the previous autumn. Then the swish of a supple bough. He watched alertly, scarcely breathing; prepared for whatever the situation demanded, he was ready to run, kill, or offer a hand in friendship.

The brush was parted and about three feet from the ground appeared a coonskin cap, crown foremost. Close to this headgear and slung over the back and shoulders of its wearer showed the fawny midriff of a deer whose hindquarters sagged downward. McDermott stepped from behind the tree, smiling humorously. It was Simon Kenton, a fellow scout.

McDermott said: "You make more noise'n a wild hog, Simon."

Simon Kenton let the deer slip to the ground and stood erect, wiping the sweat from his broad, tanned face. "Them potwallopin' sojers ol' Dunmore's got with him kin outeat anything that ever walked on two laigs. Tell me to go out an' look for meat with one eye, and keep t'other'n peeled for Indians. I say: 'How and the hell kin I look for meat when it takes two eyes to look for Indians?' They say: 'Never you mind; these sojers got to eat.' I say: 'Then let 'em eat doughcake or ketch fish, an' not suthing you got to take with a musket so's the Indians kin hear you comin' a hundred furlongs off!" As he concluded his grievances he looked at McDermott as upon one from whom to expect ready and comprehending sympathy.

McDermott sympathized and agreed. "Hain't learnt to fight Indians, not nohow." He was silent a moment, then he said: "Where they fixin' to camp to-night?"

"Aimin' to come on here afore dark," answered Kenton.

McDermott touched the deer's flank with the toe of his moccasin. There was a red viscous ring about the animal's throat where it had been bled, and a hole near the eye where it had been struck by Kenton's bullet. "Weigh nigh onto a hundred pounds," appraised McDermott.

"Weigh a full ton if you tote it a while," said Kenton, then abruptly turned the conversation: "Seen any Indians 'tween here and where you been?"

McDermott shook his head. "Like as not they all gone further south."

Kenton nodded as if this remark carried more information than the mere words gave evidence of. "Think the varmints'll fight, do you?"

McDermott, the more taciturn of the two, did not reply. There was no need. Of course the Indians would fight. And for his part he saw no reason why they should do otherwise. He had been brought up among the Senecas and could see with the Indian's own eyes how precious their hunting-ground and rudely cultivated land were to them. They had made treaties which barred them from the land east of the Alleghanies but gave them the country west of the mountains. Pennsylvania had kept her agreement not to molest them further, but Lord Dunmore, anxious for expansion, saw no reason why Virginia settlers should not push as far into the wilderness as was in their power; and if the Indians thus lost their choicest fields where they grew their corn and beans, the creeks and rivers where they fished, and saw the white man's axe making clearings in forests where they hunted bear and venison—if they thus lost the meat and cereals from their mouths, and lamented losing their subsistence, then be damned to them, sir, be damned to them!

McDermott and Kenton remained for hours by the hollow oak but there was no trace of Major Pike.

"Ol' Dunmore won't hardly be in a dudgeon when he comes and finds no Pike," said Kenton.

McDermott smiled.

It was light enough for the sun's last stains still to be

seen on the smooth Ohio when Lord Dunmore's leading pirogue came silently into sight around a bend in the river. McDermott, who sat facing north, said, "Here they air, sir," and watched the twinkling oars of the heavily laden vessel plash evenly in and out of the water. A string of boats, great hollowed-out logs they were, progressing in a line; ten of them in all, with soldiers, frontiersmen, their muskets, axes, and provisions. The two men on the shore rose and hailed them, then went down to the river's edge as the pirogues, with rippling waves echoing from their roughly modelled bows, coasted in toward the mouth of the little creek below the promontory.

Lord Dunmore, in the second boat, remained seated until the bottom scraped the bank, then stepped gravely over the gunwale and advanced, followed by his aide and one of his lieutenants. He was a tall, straight man who wore a round cap surmounted by a plume on the left side, a crimson jacket, a frilled shirt, and breeches.

Said his lordship: "Where's Major Pike, McDermott?"

McDermott answered bluntly: "Hain't no sign of him, sir."

Lord Dunmore muttered under his breath, "Damme, but that's annoying," and looked long and thoughtfully into the western woods almost as if he hoped to conjure the absent Major Pike and his three hundred men out of its fastness. After some moments he turned to his aide. "Instruct the men that we will land on the other side of the river." As Waller departed Lord Dunmore called after him: "Have them move off at once, making sure that the boats with the axes accompany them. We will want to build some kind of re-

doubt." He turned to Kenton and McDermott, "Have you *reconnoitered over in there at all?*" he said, and pointed toward the south and west.

"Not as much as I might," answered McDermott.

Lord Dunmore nodded. "Bless me, McDermott, I hope those skulking savages show their hides!" He looked anxiously about, his eyes resting at last on the east bank of the Ohio below the Kanawha's mouth.

"They'll show 'em," responded Kenton grimly, "and by nightfall, too, if they've got the best of Pike."

McDermott considered thoughtfully. "No, if Major Pike fit with Indians it was with a stray band. I don't know much about the Shawanese, but they hain't been around here long enough to have a council. Their braves are on the other side, with the Mingoes. 'Twon't be the same ones Pike fit that'll fight us."

"Indians are Indians," said Lord Dunmore sharply, "there's no difference in any of them."

"Yes," said McDermott doubtfully.

"All alike!" repeated Lord Dunmore, "all alike!" And unexpectedly he began striding furiously up and down between the two men and the hollow oak. His face above the frilled shirt was ruddy with excessive blood, and his eyes seemed to bulge from their sockets.

"Eh?" he questioned, and stopped short.

"Hain't nobody said anything," Kenton answered.

"I fancied I heard movements in the brush. Are you sure there were none!"

"Heered none," said Kenton.

"Very well, very well." Lord Dunmore steadied his eyes over a pinch of snuff. "Rascals, every one of them, damme!"

McDermott said quietly: "You want we should stay on this side and see if we run into any?"

"Eh?" Lord Dunmore stared at him. "Nonsense. I want you to find Major Pike. You, Kenton. And tell him he must come immediately." He turned to McDermott: "And you can be looking for your precious Shawanese. I shall send for you both at dawn."

With these instructions Lord Dunmore went quickly down the slope toward the pirogue which was waiting for him.

McDermott and Kenton were left alone on the river bank as the boat pushed off into midstream. The afternoon was waning and shadows seemed to drift through the trees, dark and menacing. A wide river separated them from the troops, and the forest through which they were to roam was teeming with danger. They looked at each other with forced casualness.

"I'll walk a piece with you," said Kenton.

They started, winding silently down the south side of the promontory toward a small stream that emptied into the Ohio a short distance farther. Not far up the creek was a pebbly shallows which McDermott remembered from some years before.

Striking the creek they followed upward along the soft shore line. They walked about a mile without talking, keeping close watch through the birches and willows to their right and left.

Kenton, who was in the lead, stopped short, remained motionless with his musket in his hand. McDermott stared over his shoulder.

Ahead was a small clearing, a recent one, and in the bottom land stood a patch of ripening corn. The smell of smoke was in the air.

As the two men watched there was a movement in the middle of the corn, and the head and shoulders of a man appeared above the tassels, a bareheaded man

with a high forehead, mild blue eyes, and a scraggly beard.

Kenton and McDermott dropped their muskets. McDermott called: "Good day, friend."

Not having observed their silent approach, the man looked up startled, and wielded his hoe as if he would use it as a weapon; but upon seeing that the intruders were white his eyes grew mild again. He said, "Good day," and advanced to meet them.

Drawing nearer to the clearing they saw ahead and to the right a rough log cabin with an open door, and a lean dog lying somnolently nearby. The cabin was partly surrounded by white, ragged stumps which remained of the trees that had gone into its making. Sounds of activity came from inside.

Kenton said: "Hain't you a good ways from civilization, friend?"

The man studied his visitors. "I might ask the same thing of you gentlemen, trappers though you be."

"Hain't the same with us," said McDermott. "It's whut we're paid fer."

Kenton spoke: "Hain't been seein' no Indians, have you?"

The man considered. "Fit with one over a b'ar a while back. He laid claim to it as his'n, and I laid claim to it as mine."

Kenton said: "Reckon you'll be seein' more of 'em from now on. They're kinda on the rampage."

The man asked surprisedly: "Air they now——"

He was interrupted by a voice from the cabin door. "Orestes! can't you ask the men inside?" A gaunt woman in a cotton dress of one piece stood on the threshold watching them.

The man scratched his head in confusion at having

appeared inhospitable. He jerked out: "Law, yes; come right in and we'll have a bite. It's right pleasant to see a human face—'most took me off my balance."

They followed him gravely around the patch of corn to the cabin. McDermott, knowing the stubbornness and tenacity of frontier farmers, wondered how to tell this man of his danger in such a way as to make him leave. Too many families like his, pushing doggedly into the engulfing forest, had left no more than charred remains as monuments to their efforts.

The woman, black-eyed and with dark hair growing gray, met them at the door. But even as she greeted them McDermott's gaze went beyond her into the dimness of the windowless cabin where a girl stood, hesitantly waiting. He saw shy dark eyes, and heavy braids of black hair lying over her shoulders. There was something about her deeply disturbing, and it was with an effort that he looked away.

The girl remained standing. The others sat on the stools which, with the table, comprised the furniture. In one corner was a pile of bedclothes, and at the east wall of the cabin a kettle simmered by the ruddy coals of the fireplace. The woman said: "I'll poke up the fire," and added: "I hope you men are partial to stewed coon meat. Orestes shot him out of a tree last night."

The husband asked: "Reckon you'd like a tot of rum?" As both men nodded he went for the jug. "We brung it clear from North Kerliny," he told them.

The three men drank; the woman busied herself with the fire, and the girl stood quietly near the door. After a pause her father said: "My name's Orestes Wilkinson; what might you men call yourselves?"

McDermott answered for both of them, then became

silent. After a while he said: "Lord Dunmore's on his way down here with soldiers. Prob'ly here by now."

"Sho'!" exclaimed Wilkinson respectfully. "I've heerd of him."

"There'll be fightin', right soon," McDermott went on. "Best for you to take what you can carry and skin out."

Wilkinson pondered. "That'll be all right after I've husked my corn, but I can't do it now."

"We're awarnin' you," said Kenton.

Mrs. Wilkinson advanced toward the table with a large, steaming dish. "Now if you men draw up your chairs we'll eat."

Wilkinson said, obdurately: "I don't aim to be skeered out, nohow."

"Usin' plain sense ain't bein' skeered," commented Kenton. "You stay here an' they'll burn your cabin right over your heads, 'less we drive 'em out afore they git to it."

Wilkinson answered: "Talk about that when the time comes."

"We're awarnin' you," Kenton repeated.

"Ain't any use," Mrs. Wilkinson smiled wearily. "Cain't budge him once he gets his head set."

The meal was eaten in silence. Afterward the two men shouldered their muskets. Up to the moment of parting the girl had not spoken, but instead had stood timidly in the background, looking down at her small, tanned feet, on which there were no shoes. It might have been that she was embarrassed because of her short cotton dress, torn near the bodice, or of her slim, bare legs. She was, McDermott judged from a brief glance, about eighteen, and past the bashfulness of early youth. As they were leaving, however, she

dropped him an awkward curtsey and said: "Good day, sir." He stared at her in confusion and surprise, then turned abruptly and followed Kenton through the door.

"Better meet by that rotten oak afore dawn, Angus."

"Directly afore dawn," agreed McDermott.

The two men separated.

II

McDERMOTT slipped through the trees along the trail to the south in the gray softness of evening. Dew was dissolving from the atmosphere and dampening the fallen leaves until progress over them was silent as walking over a carpet. The whole night was before him, and though he expected little to come out of it so far as discovering the movements of Indians was concerned, it was his plan to follow along the trail toward the aborigine villages lower on the banks of the Ohio. From there he would strike westward into the deeper forest and, after a few miles journey in that direction, return north and east again. By this tour he believed he would assure himself that no Shawanese were meeting in council on the west bank of the Ohio.

Knowing little of the Shawanese tribe, he nevertheless knew more of them than Lord Dunmore. The eastern Indians, except those in the powerful and advanced confederacy of the Senaca-Iroquois, among whom McDermott had been brought up, were being driven westward. Relinquishing their hunting-grounds for the bright cloths and trinkets given them, they often found themselves with no other place of settlement. For to the west lay other tribes, formidable and resentful of encroachment in the forests where, for generations, they had subsisted on the game, fish, and corn which their efforts yielded.

The Shawanese were one of the tribes thus caught between two fires, the colonists to the east and stronger tribes to the west. And after leaving Pennsylvania, four generations earlier, they had travelled hundreds of

miles, toward the south, the west, almost to the Mississippi, then back to the Ohio country where, on sufferance from the Wyandots, they were at last permitted to settle.

But that had occurred only recently, and it was McDermott's belief that these wanderers, having come there a short time before, would go to the council-fire of the Mingoes across the river rather than meet by themselves and make their own decisions with regard to war.

Nevertheless, McDermott walked cautiously as he wound his way through the darkness. The air had become chill and dampness clung to the leaves which he was continually brushing against. Save for that slight murmur of the boughs his movements made no sound.

After some few miles on his journey the trail dipped gently downward toward the river. And as he approached the point where path and water nearly met he distinguished a gleam in the blackness. He brought his musket from his shoulder and stood motionless.

A flicker of faintly suggested light, the glowing spot moved directly upward a few feet from the ground, then receded a little. There it remained. McDermott, his finger on the trigger, stepped forward. And now in the darkness were two flecks of light, close together and on a level with McDermott's chest. Too near to the Shawanese villages to risk a shot, he peered intently.

He laughed soundlessly. The pricks of light, he made out, were from the great, moist eyes of a deer, a stubborn or bewildered one who had come down to the river to drink. His rifle was replaced over his shoulder and he stood there watching the animal with sardonic interest.

On almost any other occasion he would have sprung at the deer with his hunting knife. But now there was no use killing it, for he would not be returning the same way he had come. And if he scared the deer it would go smashing through the forest to the accompaniment of thudding hoofs and crackling limbs, which would draw the attention of any Shawanese that happened to be near-by. He did not know what to do.

He advanced a pace. The deer did not retreat an inch. He shook his fist, but the deer gave no heed to this threat. Philosophically, McDermott slipped into the forest, leaving the deer standing there, and struck the trail farther on.

He came upon the Indian villages soon afterward. They lay along the river bank beneath the deep shadows of the trees. They were a cluster of bark shacks, dimly seen. In the midst of them glowed a heap of embers, but no sounds were audible. He saw them from a knoll covered with underbrush and crept down upon them through the dampness. To advance silently and yet keep hold of his musket was laborious work and slow. On his hands and knees, he half-carried and half-dragged the long weapon and let the wiry branches snap back against his shoulders as they would. He crawled to the edge of the bushes and peered through the night at the rude, quiet dwellings.

There was a sense of emptiness about the place and he had little doubt that the braves were away, but to make sure he circled around toward the water where, if they were in camp, their bark canoes would be beached. The silhouettes of only two canoes were to be seen. And having made verification of this he stealthily returned to the edge of the bush and squatted down to await their coming.

In the lonely underbrush the air was chill. And from the shore-line came the lulling sound of softly lapping water. The night wore on and he felt it strange to be hiding there, spying on those people whose greatest crime was that they wanted to keep their hunting-grounds. If it had not been for the nameless urge that had sent him seeking his own blood, he might still have been living as one of them among the Deers of the Senecas, and sharing that family's trials and fortunes. Sometimes he looked back on those years with regret that they had passed.

Watching from the brush he saw, after perhaps an hour, the solid blackness of objects moving inland across the water. His eyes, long accustomed to the night, made out their shapes: canoes. And a moment later there was the sound of moccasins on the shore as the braves stepped out and came slowly up the beach, muttering among themselves.

He listened closely, but the noises of the squaws going out to meet them, and the crying of an awakened child added to the unfamiliarity of the language made him lose what few words he might have understood. He had, however, discovered enough. The braves had been out, and there was nowhere else they would have gone in such numbers but to the council of the Mingoes. All along the river, McDermott knew, sachems and warriors would be returning from the council.

Cautiously he pushed back through the bushes that covered the knoll and then, out of hearing of the Shawanese village, struck out briskly to the west. The Indians, he was confident, would move to the attack of Lord Dunmore's troops either during the day or in the course of the following night. They too, on the other side of the river, would have their spies out in the wil-

derness, who would be watching the soldiers and frontiersmen at work on the fortifications. But it would be unusual if they allowed the colonists to move farther into their country without advancing to the attack themselves.

As he continued some miles westward through the night-enveloped forest, McDermott speculated on the kind of fortification which Lord Dunmore would order for the defense of his troops, whether the British governor would be content with a light earthwork or would insist on a stockade. The stockade took more effort but was safer, and if built of green wood there was little danger that the Indians could set fire to it.

And so thinking, McDermott turned northward.

He had gone several miles in that direction when he reached a parting in the forest; it was made by a small stream flowing toward the Ohio. As the summer had been dry the water was low in its channel. He walked along the bank, following its eastward course. It would take him not a great distance from the hollow oak across from the mouth of the Kanawha, and there he would lie down and sleep for a few hours while waiting for Simon Kenton.

Some distance farther on he stopped abruptly. There was a noise ahead, a thin and trembling sound as of some one crying, and it came to him that this was the creek that led past Wilkinson's clearing, and that he was very near to Wilkinson's cabin at the moment. He proceeded silently, sweeping the swishing, overhanging willows from in front of him with a cautious hand.

He heard the peculiar noise once more. Now it was like a muted squall of some child in distress. And McDermott soon made out a figure standing outlined in solid black against the graying darkness. As he looked

there was another sound, that of a girl's voice in a half-choked scream. It was that Wilkinson girl.

From where he stood, some yards away, McDermott's hand slipped to his hatchet. Plainly he saw this girl, and above her a hunched-up form lying along an overhanging limb. He raised his arm; as the hatchet whirred through the air he held his musket ready. There was the sound of a springy thud on the earth, and the animal bounded away among the trees.

McDermott went forward toward the girl. She, as though her energies had abandoned her, leaned against him for support. He felt her small hand clutching at his hunting-shirt while dry, wrenching sobs shook her slender body. He clumsily patted her head which lay against his breast, and gruffly sympathized: "Here now! Hain't nothing to harm you! 'Twaren't only a catamount."

When she spoke her voice was almost tranquil: "I know there ain't—not now." But she made no effort to disengage herself.

It was awkward, her pressing against him. His embarrassment was like shackles. He hadn't counted on anything like this. When he had struck out with his hatchet his instinct had been merely to protect somebody who, from her cry, seemed in need of it, and to drive off an animal that was of no use dead or alive. But now here she was leaning upon him, and judging from her panting bosom it was likely as not she would be crying again in a minute. Made a man feel like a fool. He cleared his throat and dropped one arm about her shoulder. "Hain't hurt none, air you?"

He could feel her head rubbing violently against his shirt as she quickly denied that she had been hurt. "Wa'n't afeared of it," she said, and her voice came

softly and huskily. "I knowed I wa'n't in no danger. All I had to do was holler and Paw'd been right out with his musket. But I heered it that sudden—an' the way it whimpered-like!"

He nodded, staring into the darkness. "After that dog of your'n, I reckon. 'Twaren't smart to leave yore cabin."

"It cried so piteous-like. I a'most knowed it was a baby," she explained.

He smiled at that. Thinking the mewing of a catamount could be the cry of a child! He told her: "Hain't fitten you folks should be here nohow." Gravely he added: "Better do like Kenton says. It ain't safe around here nowhere."

She said: "Pappy wouldn't hear to it—leastways not till he got in his crops."

From the darkened cabin came the voice of her father: "Charity! Where in land's name air you?"

She slipped from beneath his arm, whispering: "Now I'll catch it!" She pushed him gently. "Go. Pappy wouldn't know what to make of it if he found you an' me here talkin'."

An instant before he would have welcomed an excuse to be free of her disturbing closeness, but now he felt hurt at her going. "Good-by, ma'am," he said gravely.

As she slipped through the cornfield to the cabin he turned and went slowly along the bank of the shallow stream toward the hollow oak.

He sat down, leaning against the dead tree. He had been sleepy a while before, but now he was very awake. From across the river, muffled by the wide stretch of water, came the sounds of chopping as frontiersmen and soldiers swung their axes, squaring timber for the

stockade and blockhouse. It needed to be a good one, he thought grimly, for the Indians would be far the greater in numbers, and many of them would be equipped with shot and muskets which they had been given by French and English playing against each other for possession of the continent.

It was nearly daybreak when sounds came from the underbrush and the voice of Kenton called: "Oh, Angus?"

Kenton sat down beside him and bit deeply into a plug of tobacco. "Have a chaw?"

"Never got used to it," said McDermott. He waited for Kenton to tell him what had transpired during the night on his northward journey.

"Well," said Kenton at last, "I couldn't find hide nor hair of him. Don't stand to reason they'd of all been killed, now does it?"

McDermott gave low-voiced agreement.

Beyond the forest on the east side of the Ohio the sky was thinning from black to gray. In the open space where the two men were sitting the surrounding brush was an impenetrable wall, and the shafts of the trees were sombre columns that rose into the enveloping night.

"Thirty miles I must have travelled lookin' for Pike, and ef he'd come down on t'other side of the river like I wanted he should, he'd of been here two days ago. But no use argyin' with a man so plumb set in his ways as Dunmore." He paused and peered through the darkness at McDermott. "What you been adoin'?"

McDermott told him.

Kenton agreed with him in his conjectures of the movements of the Indians. "We'll see 'em afore the next sunset."

The sky took on a lighter shade of gray and into it stretched a pearl-like spangle from the rising sun. On the farther side of the river all was still and no lights glowed. But from the trees where the two men sat there came the drowsy twittering of waking birds and the cheep-cheep-cheep of a young one calling.

Soon it would be time for Lord Dunmore to send over the pirogue for his two scouts. They were waiting for it as the dawn spread wider from the east. Now the heavens were alight with softly glistening colors, and at the point of land between the Ohio and Kanawha banks there was to be seen a low-built square of heavy logs fronting the rivers from a recent clearing. Beneath this hurriedly built and incompletely fashioned stockade, the pirogues were moored at the river's edge.

The two men gazed at this fortress with critical eyes.

Kenton said: "'Pears to me like they hain't no blockhouse, Angus."

McDermott answered: "Maybe he reckons to move further down directly."

Kenton shook his head. "He hain't the man to go sallyin' after Indians."

McDermott was silent.

Kenton, making a sharper inspection, ejaculated: "Nor a trench or earthworks neither; now what in the hell kind of a fort is that?"

Starting through the dawn McDermott made out one figure, then another leave the stockade and wind down toward the pirogues. "They're acomin' after us," he said to Kenton.

"I see 'em," replied Kenton.

Trying to make his question sound casual, McDermott asked: "Reckon we'd have time afore they git here to try and fetch that old man Wilkinson?"

Kenton thought a moment. "Time enough, but it's right doubtful if we'd budge him. He don't like to be interfered with much." The pirogue was moving forward.

"Well—" began McDermott.

But he did not finish. As he spoke he had been looking at the boat putting out into the water, a man with a paddle at either end. What checked him was the curious action of the man in the stern. Soldier or frontiersman, he dropped his paddle and leaned forward, rose to his knees and went flat on his face in the bottom of the boat while his hands wrenched at his left side.

Both men sprang up, their muskets gripped. "What in the—" said Kenton.

The boatman in the bow turned his head.

McDermott saw him stand bolt upright and leap as if it was his intention to run through the water. His arms outflung, he disappeared over the right side of the canoe, his head coming above the surface a moment later.

McDermott's eyes were levelled penetratingly at the forest to the south of the stockade. The sun was up, brightening the scene. Among the trees he saw vague shadows which solidified into active figures with arched bows and upraised muskets as they appeared on the fringe of the clearing.

"'y God, a surprise!" Kenton's voice was raised for a shout; excitement and apprehension held it down to a choking whisper.

But it was not a surprise. From the stockade came the sound of ragged firing, and two braves of the half dozen leading the attack sprawled wide-armed in the

clearing among the jagged stumps. The others wheeled and quickly disappeared.

The two men on the shore stared questioningly into each other's faces. Before them the Ohio, brilliant in the dawn, stretched its tawny width. And on the other side soldiers and frontiersmen thrust long-barrelled muskets through cracks and loopholes and fired at yelping Indians, who discharged their own shot and arrows from the security of the forest. The pirogue which had been sent after them was drifting downstream, carrying a man with a barb in his side, while the head of his former companion was no longer visible.

Kenton said: "Don't seem right to be leavin' my musket, nohow."

McDermott was already bending over the opening into the hollow tree. Raising his weapon, he placed it carefully inside the bole, butt foremost, then unslung his pouch and powder-horn and hooked them on the muzzle. He turned and regarded Kenton in silence.

There was no need of talking for both were thinking the same thoughts. Where they stood was safety, but beyond the river was deep and wide, and death was stalking its farther bank. They did not want to go particularly, yet there was something inside them that would not let them stay, a scorn of mortal danger, a grim faith in their destinies. Certain it was that their lips were pinched, and that the sternness of horror glazed their eyes. Kenton put his musket beside McDermott's in the hollow tree, then both wound slowly down the bank to the river.

They slipped into the water from the branch of a low-hanging willow, keeping under cover as long as they could. McDermott first and Kenton after him, they struck out through the piercing chill toward mid-

stream. McDermott felt the skin of his breeches and moccasins grow soggy, and the weight slowed down the scissor-like movements of his legs. He swam on his side, with only one hand leaving the water, so that his progress would make less of a ripple on the surface. Each time he drew up his knees to kick it came to him that he might better have left his moccasins off. But bare feet would have been as bad a handicap in the wilderness.

It was not long until he entered the current. He could feel the water pressing against his chin and swirling with mighty force around his body. With a cold determination he fought against the flow that swept him down the stream. There was no time to look to right or left, for an instant of idling might drive him from his course and land him far south of the stockade, where the Indians were in full control. Nor was there time to see if Kenton was swimming in line, or to watch that clearing where musket-ball and arrow crossed; strong and ever active arms were needed for the passage.

Two rivers raced in the channel, carrying him downward. He ground his teeth and his strokes clove the water with increasing effort. To get across, to penetrate this violent swiftness became his only thought; and letting his body slip down flat so that his face was covered by the streaming surface, he worked his arms like flails. And now, despite his soggy clothing he could feel himself going freely forward.

With a final spurt, his heart aching with the effort, he was out of the channel and into the gentler portion of the river. As he felt the release of that swirling pressure he paused and gave one hasty look. The stockade was upstream and the rattle of musketry was sounding from it; to his left he saw the head of Kenton still reso-

lutely breasting the current. He had begun to swim toward the rude fort when a shot from the nearer shore ripped through the water in front of him.

He dived, pushing forward beneath the surface. Some distance closer his destination, he showed his head for air. But the Indian on the bank had kept a watchful eye. Another shot splashed viciously near McDermott's shoulder.

He went down again, grimly bent on reaching the cluster of pirogues moored by the bank. Close to the muddy bottom, he swam a rapid breast stroke, his eyes wide open. Seconds went past. There was a roaring in his head and his lungs were painfully expanding. Now only a little more. . . . But he couldn't do it. Gasping, he had to expose himself again.

The third shot clipped his shoulder, and as he went down he felt a numbness, a stiffening of the muscles in his arm. Swimming on, he was aware of the water becoming shallower. Pulling himself along by means of weeds and rocks desperately clutched, he came up under the shadows of the pirogues. Clinging to the farther side of one of them he breathed with a dry, racking noise that was almost like a sob.

Rested, he crawled to the shore on his hands and knees. There was a wallowing splash behind him. He turned, his left hand gripping the hilt of his hunting-knife. It was Kenton. Through blue lips Kenton asked waveringly: "Y' hit?"

"Shoulder," said McDermott briefly, his eyes already travelling down the shore-line in search of the Indian who had shot him. But the land was irregular, with bushes growing clear to the water. "Let's move," he added.

They scrambled up the path back of the stockade

and shouted to be let inside. A rough-hewn door was partly opened and from behind it a voice exclaimed wonderingly: "Law, it's them now, your lordship!" The door swung wide and they entered.

Lord Dunmore, from his tent near the corner of the stockade, lifted his heavy eyebrows in surprise. "'Pon my word!" he said, and treated his nostrils to a pinch of snuff. Back of him, at the two sides fronting the wood and clearing, stood a row of soldiers and frontiersmen, their shoulders pressed against the butts of muskets whose barrels were thrust through cracks and loopholes. Others sat or lay on the ground. Here and there a white strip of bandage showed on a head or arm while in the corner farthest from Lord Dunmore's tent a heavy cloth had been stretched over two supine, motionless figures.

"'Pon my word!" repeated Lord Dunmore, and advanced. He dropped his white hand on McDermott's shoulder.

McDermott winced.

Lord Dunmore lifted his hand and looked at the palm. It was covered with warm, congealing blood, coppery red. "My good man!" he expostulated, "you've been wounded!" Quickly he turned his head. "A bandage, doctor! At once, *please.*"

"Here," said Kenton, "peel off that shirt," and took hold of the wet clothing at McDermott's waist.

There was a sharp fusillade and the thud of missiles striking against the logs.

McDermott looked toward his shoulder where the lieutenant-doctor was probing for the ball, peering over his instrument with his bright brown eyes. It hurt considerably, but the wound was not deep. The steel prod made a scraping sound, the pain grew worse, and Mc-

Dermott shut his teeth; a little later the doctor said, "There!" and held up the ball as a curiosity.

Kenton and Lord Dunmore regarded the ball. Kenton commented: "Shoulder must of been under water, Angus. Ain't even flattened out."

"'Twas," confirmed McDermott. He waited patiently for the wound to be dressed.

Through the bright morning air came a whirring sound. An arrow struck in the earth no more than a foot from where they were standing, and the feathered end quivered violently.

"Varmint!" Kenton called out angrily. "You'll come outa your perch when I lay my hands on a musket!"

The arrow had been launched from the limb of a tree and the group of men moved quickly toward the shelter of the wall to avoid another.

Firing from the logs continued, the men making their own charges and ramming them down the muzzles with slender iron rods. Faces were drawn and stiff, both soldiers and frontiersmen hiding their apprehensions under eyes glazed to the point of apathy. Loading was slow work, and though both sides of the stockade fronting the woods and clearing were lined with riflemen who fired steadily, the dull, sickening noise of shot and arrow against the logs did not diminish as the sun grew brighter. Many a hand, clicking back a hammer, trembled. It would be a drawn-out siege, McDermott could see that at the outset.

Striding up to Kenton, who had got hold of a musket, Lord Dunmore was inquiring: "What of Major Pike? May we expect him shortly?"

And Kenton was giving the only answer there was to be given: "Cain't say, 'cause I hain't seen him. Most

walked my laigs off last night, but there wa'n't no track of him."

Lord Dunmore caught his lips in silence, looked up quickly as a frontiersman turned from the loophole, and with piteous fingers explored the side of his face, which was a splotch of blood.

III

THE sun poured mellow heat down into the stockade, and the men firing between the cracks in the logs paused now and again to wipe off sweat from their faces. The still air was permeated with the acrid smell of gunpowder, blue-gray wraiths of it curling up from hot musket muzzles and stinging the faces of the perspiring men. Near the corner of the unstripped logs by the river bank and clearing stood McDermott, his hand in a sling and the sleeve of his hunting-shirt bulging over the bandage which the doctor had wrapped about his shoulder. His coarse black hair, on account of the river water, lay sleekly back for once, and his brown face was a little paler and sharper than usual. Those two signs with the bandage were all that gave evidence of his having swum the Ohio in the early dawn under fire from the Indians.

Grave and motionless, he looked out through a narrow chink at the clearing and the forest beyond. Back of a gashed stump lay a figure in the thickly matted grass; it was a Shawanese or Mingo, and there was a tomahawk still grasped in its lifeless hand. Over to the left and scattered the length of the clearing were others who had fallen in the successive rushes of the morning, wounded and afraid to move or caught in the still hand of death.

McDermott's eyes went deeper into the forest, but there he could see nothing but tree and underbrush. For the Indians had withdrawn and were gathered somewhere in a parley led by Logan, the Mingo, Corn-

stalk or Blackhoof of the Shawanese. There would be suggestion and debate as to their actions, plans involving cunning, and plans for a defiant flinging of themselves once more against the stockade. And the war chiefs would listen and decide.

As the Indians fell back from their last attack the men in the stockade turned away from the loopholes to look anxiously toward the cook, who stood beside the cold, empty kettle and argued hotly with a soldier, who was loudly indignant because it was midday and there were no signs of food.

The cook was fat and his shirt was spotted with grease. Raising an immense forearm he brought his fist down into the palm of his hand and shouted: "Haul yore carcase outa my sight afore I clip yore ears off! You'll eat when I'm fetched some wood by these skulkin' buckskins!"

The insult to the frontiersmen was quickly challenged by one of them: "Call me a skulkin' buckskin, you ornery lump o' taller!" and a gaunt man whose shirt-sleeves barely reached below his elbows swung dourly forward.

Lieutenant Byrd, his mustache twitching nervously, turned from the wall where he had been peering out on the clearing and stepped up to the frontiersmen. "None of that!" he commanded sharply. "Both you men take hold of axes and see if you can't cut enough wood to last through the night." He looked around for some one to accompany them.

McDermott said: "I'll go."

"But your arm!" objected Lieutenant Byrd.

"No better inside than out," McDermott told him. With muskets over their shoulders and axes in their hands the two men already chosen and a third followed

McDermott through the door that opened at the back of the stockade and out into the forest beyond the clearing.

Among the trees McDermott stopped and directed the men: "I'll watch out so there won't be no surprise. Go to choppin', and if you have to run for it, just recollect that what you come out here for was wood."

The two soldiers stared at him in bewilderment as he left them. The frontiersman spat on the palms of his hands and gripped his axe. "We'll bring the wood," he said grimly.

McDermott walked on a short distance and sat down behind a walnut-tree; holding his musket in his lap he watched and listened intently. But his ears, he realized, were of not much service to him, trained to the sounds of the forest though they were. For from behind him came the pithy clip-clop, clip-clop, distinct and measured, of the axes of the three men cutting up a pile of wood. He sat there, thoughtfully regarding the heavy summer foliage and trying to shut the sound of the steadily swinging axes from his hearing.

He was looking between two maples when he noticed the quivering of a leaf a few yards away. A branch not high from the ground rustled slightly, and he saw a patch of brown flit for an instant against the woodland green. He thought: might be a bird and might be an Indian. To make certain was too great a risk. He fired a warning shot to the wood-chopping party and ran swiftly toward the stockade.

As he came up to the place where he had left the three men he saw the soldiers, their arms loaded with wood, running awkwardly across the clearing, and the frontiersman was bending over to pick up a final stick. The frontiersman's face was white but dogged.

"Go it!" McDermott hurled the words at him, and stooped to pick up the axes that had been left behind.

"I'm agoin' it!" the frontiersman told him.

Together they raced over the clearing toward the stockade, hastened by the singing of a musket-ball that buried itself in a stump before them. They did not look to the rear. There was no need. Shouts from the stockade as well as a rattling fire left no doubt that the attack was being resumed, and that the Indians had reached the edge of the forest.

Out of breath, pains shooting the length of his arm, McDermott spurted after the long-legged frontiersman as the throaty "Hi-yah! hi-yah!" rang its savage fury in their ears. They almost sprawled through the door which had been held open for them by Lieutenant Byrd.

Back of them the heavy door slammed shut and was barred by an oaken stave. The frontiersman spilled his load of wood and took up a rifle. He loped across the ground toward Lord Dunmore, who had found for him a place in the wall from which to fire.

The noise outside was fearful. Kneeling at his corner McDermott saw them coming, their bronzed faces strained, the cords standing rigid on their bare necks, and knife and glinting tomahawk aloft as they flung themselves in their frenzy against the jets of piercing lead that made a barrier between them and the stockade walls. It chilled him to hear their cries and to see them, leaping and reeling as some fell, continue to press on.

They swarmed in the clearing, and in the fringe of the forest McDermott could see others moving about, either waiting as reinforcements or else trying to nerve themselves to join the attack in the open. That they

would reach the walls of the stockade was certain. McDermott knew. His fingers touched the blood-soaked bandage on his shoulder. For once a musket was of no account.

Lord Dunmore was walking restlessly along the log wall, jerking his head so that the tassel bobbed and exclaiming irritably: "Pepper the bloody rascals, pepper them, I say!" His linen collar above his crimson coat was ringed with dirt, and there was a rip in his breeches. But he carried himself with a back as straight as if it had been an Indian's, and his eyes under his heavy brows were full of fire. Coming up to McDermott he shouted: "How long does this sort of thing usually go on?"

McDermott stared at him as if he had suddenly gone mad.

"Eh?" he pressed the question.

What a crazy thing to ask! "Why," said McDermott, "either till they fall back or climb over and jump inside."

Inattentive to McDermott's reply, Lord Dunmore said, "That infernal yelling!" and strode away toward Lieutenant Byrd and Waller, who were firing shoulder to shoulder.

McDermott stared beyond Lord Dunmore's retreating back to Kenton, sweating as he solicitously rammed his rod into the muzzle of his musket. A man beside Kenton, McDermott saw, went down, a soldier who sagged to his knees as if he had been bludgeoned. Kenton held him with his free arm and called for the doctor. But the doctor was engaged with another, a stringy, ashen youth who had a slug of lead in his chest and was coughing blood.

"Hi-yah! hi-yah!" sounded fiercely from the other side of the stockade and above the firing came a noise like men wildly scrambling and wrestling.

McDermott looked apprehensively up to the top log, half expecting to see a painted face surmounting it. But there was only the bright blue sky. He arose and walked slowly over to Kenton, who still stood with his rifle in one hand and the other arm grasping the wounded soldier. Kenton shook his head and the lines set deeper about his mouth as McDermott came up. "Easy," he said as McDermott took hold of the soldier, "he's 'bout done in."

He was. As McDermott carried him toward the doctor there was a gurgling in his throat, and a spot of pink foam appeared on his lips. Kenton looked mutely at the doctor, the only man there whose eyes still held the light of intelligence. Busy with a wad of bandage over a prone man whose wound he was stanching, he briefly signified for McDermott to lower his burden.

Lord Dunmore ranted, moving back and forth: "Pepper them, by God!" He stopped as a man at the wall beside him dropped back. The man was clutching at an arrow that had pierced his neck. "Oh, poor fellow, poor fellow!" Misery was in Dunmore's voice.

"Hi-yah! hi-yah-hi-yah!" was shouted from outside.

"Boil up some water," the doctor told McDermott, almost calmly.

McDermott went to the wood-pile and splintered a stick into kindling. The smell of the gunpowder, searingly sharp, of the sweat and blood and the dead stretched out under the canvas made him dizzy as he knelt. After lighting the wood he looked about for the cook to ask for a kettle to heat the water in. But the cook was at the wall across the square of ground, his

fat arms loading a musket. McDermott searched among the supplies for a kettle.

There was a hammering on the logs and McDermott saw the door rattling against the bar that secured it. He shouted: "They're over here!"

A few wan-faced men came running and thrust their muskets through the chinks.

McDermott steadied himself and continued searching for a kettle. The door rattled and shot flew through the cracks in the logs. He found the kettle, filled it, and set it on the blaze.

"They're acomin' up the bank," yelled one of the men by the door, and Lieutenant Byrd hastily called three men from the opposite wall and sent them across the square. McDermott tightened his lips and looked into the kettle. There was cool sweat on his forehead and his back was a wave of chills; the calmness of his hand made it seem unfamiliar, as if it might have belonged to some one else.

A soldier screamed in a choked voice.

McDermott looked up to see a face like that of a malignant hawk appearing over the wall, a long forehead sloping back from jutting brows and scanty hair peeled almost to the crown. Two brown hands were on the top log, and in one of them was the glinting blade of a knife.

Kenton wheeled and fired. The face screwed up and vanished, and there was the sound of a body falling on the ground. Another popped into sight near where the first had been, then one on each side of it.

The top log was alive with hands and faces and struggling shoulders. A leg was thrown over and an Indian came down inside the wall, his tomahawk upraised. A club sent the weapon flying and another bashed his

head. He sprawled and was trampled over as cursing soldiers and frontiersmen surged to the wall. There was a furious barking of muskets and the heads disappeared.

Suddenly the attack collapsed.

Inside the stockade grew up an unnatural stillness, unbroken save for the uncontrollable whimpering of one of the wounded and the repeated cry of "O God, O God!" from a dying man. Soldiers and frontiersmen stood about, the hot muzzles of their muskets leaning against their jackets and hunting-shirts. The doctor worked unceasingly with his knife and his bandages. He looked at McDermott and nodded toward the kettle of water sizzling above the flames.

McDermott brought the water. He did not speak. It was as though the power of death was still so close and strong that before it the men could only look dully and with sealed lips. Fear had drawn them within themselves, and haggard eyes stared furtively away from the dead and wounded. They dared not even look into the clearing to make sure that the Indians had gone.

For some time they stood thus. Then the cook waddled over to the wood-pile and laid several sticks on the fire. Watching him uneasily they at length broke up into little groups. Lord Dunmore went into his tent. Lieutenant Byrd moved from one man to another: "Load your muskets; they may be back any time."

A frontiersman said, "Law, leftenant, 'pears like we'll mebbe have a meal, now don't it?" and looked with shining wistfulness at the cook who was bending over the large black kettle.

Gradually they recovered their self-possession.

A goat-faced soldier with red-rimmed eyes observed

hoarsely: "Sye, lookit the buckskins around that kettle! If they'd been that anxious to fight the savidges"—he poised his question—"eh, now?"

And a lanky frontiersman cautioned sternly: "Season yourself, you blockhead!"

The epithetical feud between buckskin and soldier went on, the goat-faced man laughing uncertainly.

Lieutenant Byrd walked up to the cook. "You'd best cook up plenty while you've got the chance. It's a gamble when we'll eat again." He crossed the stockade to the south wall, staring long and intently into the clearing.

McDermott joined the lieutenant. "What's to be done about to-night?"

"Think they'll come back, do you?" asked Byrd.

"Allus do," said McDermott; "but a trench might hinder 'em from climbin' up the wall."

Byrd nodded. "Did have that in mind, but the boys are pretty fagged for shovelin'."

"Fagged!" said Kenton coming up; "you jist tell them soldiers o' yourn that if they want to keep their hair on they'd best to hump their backs, an' see 'em make the dirt fly."

Lieutenant Byrd stood nervously twisting his mustache.

"An' I'd post a sentry over them pirogues, too," counselled Kenton.

Byrd's hand dropped; he stiffened and his face went white. "Good God, do you suppose—" Without finishing his remark he hurried to the door and down the bank.

Kenton laughed mirthlessly. "Now what in the hell do you think of that? Ef I jine up with sojers again may I be strung up an' shot!"

McDermott agreed. "They hain't much account with Indians."

"Hain't up to snuff—not hardly," said Kenton.

From the boiling kettle came the heavy smell of stew, drawing the hungry soldiers and frontiersmen. "I'm so hungry," said one of them, "I could chaw the tail plumb offen a skunk, blamed if I couldn't."

Lieutenant Byrd came back and spoke to one of the frontiersmen near the kettle. "Take your musket and stand guard over the pirogues."

The frontiersman drew himself up. "You don't want me, mister. Ef you reckon you kin git me loose from this yere stew-pot, jist you go to pryin'."

"You can eat first," conceded Lieutenant Byrd.

"Hain't no two ways about that," said the frontiersman.

The afternoon wore on. After the pot had been emptied to its iron bottom a digging detail was formed, and Lieutenant Byrd led them in front of the stockade. There was the sound of spades grating in the earth and of fresh dirt falling.

The sun sloped gently down the western skies as Kenton and McDermott sat talking, considering the fortunes that approaching night would bring. Half the men were outside the stockade, some having been sent for wood, others on a burial party, and the bulk of them making an entrenchment around the base of the stockade. Within, the doctor worked uninterruptedly, talking in a low, placating voice as he probed into raw, torn flesh.

Lord Dunmore came out of his tent and stalked over to where McDermott and Kenton sat with their backs against the log wall. He said: "Your shoulder improved, McDermott?"

McDermott answered: "Wa'n't more'n a scratch."

Lord Dunmore shook his head and clicked his tongue against his teeth. "Kenton, I believe——"

There was a swift clumping, as of some one running, outside the door, and the frontiersman who had been sent to guard the boats called breathlessly: "They're over on the other side; they're right there now. I see 'em signallin'!"

"Signallin'!" echoed Kenton, "what in the hell air they signallin' for?"

"Reckon he means it's Pike," said McDermott slowly.

At this hopeful interpretation Lord Dunmore gripped the frontiersman's shoulders and he shouted: "Who? 'Fore God, man, who?"

Sullen and astonished the frontiersman muttered: "Sho' it's Major Pike. Ain't that what I been atellin' you?"

Lord Dunmore dropped his hands. "Where's Byrd? O Byrd! Damme, but that's welcome news! Eh, McDermott, you rascal!"

Hearing his name called, Lieutenant Byrd came hurrying from the trench.

"Did you hear that, Byrd? Pike has come. Send out the boats at once." Lord Dunmore's face glowed ruddily and the dulness disappeared from his eyes.

Lieutenant Byrd wheeled and looked for boatmen. To the burial party just returning he called out: "Drop those spades and follow me—all of you."

The men stared at him and obeyed. As they passed through the door Lord Dunmore and Kenton walked after them, Waller joining.

McDermott went to the edge of the bank near the

stockade wall and watched the boats shove off. Across the wide Ohio, shimmering with the evening sun upon it, he saw the small figures of men grouped around the dead oak-tree on the green promontory. Some of the men were doubtless obscured by the trees and bushes, but even after considering that, the body of them was not nearly so large as it had been when they started out into the wilderness. Going toward them were the pirogues, riding high on the surface, and with a man paddling at either end of each of them. Long, heavy boats, they were driven forward slowly.

After a while he saw them land, saw the men ashore come down to meet them as the bows of the leading pirogue touched the narrow strip of beach. Two men stood a little apart and talked as the boats were manœuvred and the soldiers got aboard. One looked like Lord Dunmore, the other doubtless was Major Pike; and McDermott twisted his lips ruefully as he thought of the smarting rebuke Lord Dunmore would be giving Pike.

When the first boat pushed off the two men got in together. McDermott waited for them to come back, anxious for news of their journey. Though it was not difficult to guess what had delayed them. They had either lost their way or, falling into an armed camp of Indians, had been forced to fight or be taken prisoners. And with this settled in his mind his thoughts winged across the water and beyond to the clearing by the creek where the Wilkinsons had their cabin. How had they fared, he wondered. It was unlikely that there would have remained bands of Shawanese on that side of the river when the others were attacking the stockade. But still it gave him uneasiness as he pictured the man, the woman, and that girl over there by themselves, and

he determined that at his first chance he would go over and see if they remained unharmed.

He had been right about the fate of Major Pike. The first boat having landed below, Lord Dunmore and his officer climbed up the embankment, and Lord Dunmore, puffing with exertion, was saying irritably: "But damme, man, I thought I gave you instructions to fight under no circumstances! It's rank insubordination! What have you to say for yourself, eh?"

And Pike: "It was fight or not get here at all, your lordship. There's no avoiding savages on the warpath."

"Nonsense! If you'd kept to your route you wouldn't have run into them."

"Well, then," said Pike, "blame the guide you gave me—but don't curse him too roundly; he was one of the first they got." He saw McDermott. "Hey there! Been hit, McDermott?"

McDermott gave him his left hand. "Howdy, major."

The two men went into the stockade and Pike's haggard-faced soldiers straggled in after them.

Kenton came up and joined McDermott. "Lost clost onto a hundred men an' all the baggage to boot."

McDermott nodded and stared up at the sky.

Kenton took out a twist of tobacco and bit into it with relish. "Don't hear no diggin' goin' on, do you?"

"What they stoppin' for?"

Kenton spat and a light of satisfaction came into his eyes as the brown jet struck the slender trunk of a sapling. "Dunmore aims not to be here to-night, 'lowed now that Pike's come we'll push right in an' tangle up with 'em on their own ground."

McDermott pondered this. "They'll want we should show 'em the way, I reckon."

"Be the first time ef they didn't," Kenton answered.

When they went inside preparations were already being made. Soldiers were rolling baggage, Lord Dunmore's tent was being taken down, and the officers were calling for some kind of formation. Lieutenant Byrd moved about choosing enough for a few squads who would remain to guard the stores and the wounded against marauders.

Lord Dunmore said: "Byrd, make sure they draw the boats well up on the bank and have a strong post put over them." He turned to Kenton and McDermott. "You know we're going forward?"

They nodded.

"Then proceed as usual. We should engage the rascals before dark."

McDermott took one of Major Pike's extra pistols and followed Kenton across the clearing and into the forest to the south.

Going through that stretch of shorn timber over which the smell of gunpowder thickly hung he had held his breath, and kept his eyes averted from the bodies lying among the stumps, and now it was almost with pleasure that he walked into the grouping shadows of the forest. When they had gone some distance from the stockade he and Kenton parted, each moving under the trees on either side of the trail.

McDermott advanced slowly, his senses alert to sight and sound. The Shawanese and Mingoes would not be far away, a few miles at the most. For even if they had been vanquished completely they would have remained near enough to the stockade for them to get their dead and wounded from the clearing sometime during the night. Knowing them, he felt that they, having failed to take the stockade by storm, would be gathered in

the depths of the wood, waiting to make a surprise attack by night.

After an hour of cautious walking, in which he covered about three miles, there came to him distinctly the smell of wood-smoke. His left hand dropped to the butt of his pistol and he paused, then crept forward on hands and knees. There was an open space in the wood ahead; he could tell it from the increasing degree of light on the leaves at the end of his vision. He lay still, listening intently. But he could hear no sound. Raising himself a little, he crawled onward. A musket-ball whirred menacingly over his head, and he dropped flat on the moist leaves and coarse grass. Motionlessly he waited. Pike, if not Lord Dunmore, would take the sound of the shot to mean that one of the scouts had made contact with the Indians. And if they hurried . . .

As he lay there the ground seemed to vibrate with the soft thudding of quickly moving men. They came on, making the bushes and the dead wood underfoot snap and crackle. The point of a long bayonet pierced the foliage and a frontiersman came into sight, gray and ghostlike in the spreading dusk.

He saw McDermott, said "Where are they?" and without waiting for an answer rushed on. Others followed with heavily tramping sounds; the noise was as loud as if wild animals were stampeding. McDermott stood up and moved toward the trail. Soldiers and frontiersmen were streaming down it toward the enemy. A moment later and there were shouts ahead and an exuberant clatter of musketry.

McDermott fell in behind Lord Dunmore whose long sword slapped against his legs. He was giving hectic encouragement to right and left as he strode jerkily ahead. McDermott silently noted the men going into

the attack. As yet there was no evidence of resistance, and he began to wonder if that first shot had been fired from the main body, or whether the bulk of the Shawanese and Mingoes were farther back or on another trail. But if they were not in the open space ahead then what was all the shooting for!

In the open space a fire burned. The flaming logs had been kicked about and one of them was charring a blanket on which an Indian had been seated a little while before. A Shawanese was lying on his side and squirming, but making no sound. Ahead the rattling of shot continued, and now and again the foliage was clipped by a ball from the direction in which McDermott was moving.

A man broke through the growing darkness. He was calling: "Where's Lord Dunmore?"

Lord Dunmore himself answered, "Here you are!" and grasped the man's shoulder.

"Major Pike, sir—got 'em on the run—wants to know—we go ahead!" Breathless from exertion and excitement the man delivered his message.

"Eh!" said Lord Dunmore, "on the run? Then don't let up for an instant. We'll teach these rascals!"

The man raced back.

The trail wound down to the right toward the river. As they neared the bank the sky above the trees grew bright and glowing. They saw it and hurried forward. Coming out of the forest close to the river's edge they stood still. Not far away a Mingo village was in flames, and in the light of the ruddy blaze McDermott could see the shapes of soldiers, frontiersmen and Indians moving about as if in a kind of grotesque dance, harsh, angular, and slow. While the heavier firing continued farther to the south the people about the flames went

toward each other, mingled and stepped back again; they repeated their movements like an ill-learned formula. There was a scattering of shot.

Pushing through the corn-field that lay between the forest and the burning village, Lord Dunmore, McDermott and those that followed came near enough to see the scene in its actuality: a few braves making a final stand, and a huddle of squaws and children drawing away from the invaders who, having set fire to the buildings and routed their owners, now confusedly and aimlessly thrust at a large group of squaws.

Lord Dunmore advanced; he snapped out: "Stop those antics and take these creatures prisoner!" Looking sharply about him he demanded: "Who is in charge here—McDermott!—where's McDermott?" As McDermott stepped up he said: "Oh, there you are. Now talk to these miserable wretches."

McDermott looked at their dark, sullen faces which were burnished by the flames. He asked: "What family are you?"

They shifted uneasily and remained silent.

"The white father asks it," said McDermott.

They glowered at Lord Dunmore. "No white father."

"Powerful white father," said McDermott firmly; "sachem of the long knives." He watched them, patiently questioning: "What family?"

An old warrior edged forward. "Psake-the," he announced.

"Come!" cut in Lord Dunmore, "what does he say, McDermott?"

"He says the Deer family." He turned again to the old warrior: "Where is the sachem of the Deers?"

"Long knives kill sachem." The old eyes blazed.

McDermott translated: "Their chief is dead," then

went on in the mellifluous dialect: "Where is the chief sachem?"

A gaunt arm was pointed southward toward the firing.

Lord Dunmore spoke to one of the soldiers: "Drive these people back to the stockade. We're wasting time."

Leaving a few of the soldiers with the prisoners, they pushed on into the forest, which was now black with night.

At the next village they stopped, making headquarters for the night. Runners were sent ahead to inform the officers. Sentries were posted and a few trees felled for protection. McDermott wrapped a blanket about his shoulders and leaned against a tree. Lord Dunmore paced nervously back and forth, brooding.

The night lengthened and grew quiet. Soldiers and frontiersmen began dribbling back, some of them bringing prisoners, proud of having taken them, yet a little fearful of their strength and moodiness, and calling out to hide that fear: "Go long there! you plagued whelps!"

Hours later Lieutenant Byrd arrived. Sleepily McDermott heard him and Lord Dunmore talking. "It was a rout, warm my britches if it wasn't! Seems like we must have scattered 'em to the four corners of the earth."

McDermott slept.

When he awoke it was morning and Lord Dunmore was standing over him. "Damme, open your eyes, man!" He sat up. Around him the soldiers and frontiersmen had been drawn into a semblance of formation by which they encircled the remains of the Indian village, and in the centre stood a dozen sachems and warriors, men young and old representing the families

of the two tribes which had been scourged from their hunting-grounds. Whatever the fate of their people was to be they awaited it calmly.

McDermott walked with Lord Dunmore toward them, stopped a pace distant from the foremost of them, a man of medium size, but sharp-faced and with hair as black as a raven's wing. As Lord Dunmore halted the Indians made a movement as if they would sit down, but the white man raised his hand. "Tell them we've had enough of that nonsense, McDermott. They're whipped, and they know it. They must *go—on* the other side of the Ohio, and not molest our settlers any longer."

McDermott flushed. Those words were hard to say to these people. "The white father . . . to leave these hunting-grounds . . . and find new lands beyond the Ohio . . . and not come back as long as the forest grows and the water runs in the rivers. The white father has spoken."

They remained silent until McDermott had concluded. Then the sharp-faced sachem said: "Our people have come a great distance. Always we have been driven from our hunting-grounds by the white man. Our brothers have been murdered and our fields and houses burned. Our people are weary and would like to rest. They will go to the farther side of the Ohio." Solemnly the others nodded. "The Indian has spoken."

Lord Dunmore nodded his satisfaction and they filed out of the clearing, walking gravely, their moccasins silent on the grass, blankets folded over one shoulder. McDermott watched them until their long, leather leggings and blankets were out of sight.

Even as he spoke Lord Dunmore's words McDermott felt their futility. And now as the northward

march began to the stockade, with the pirogues lying nearby, he realized anew that Lord Dunmore had exacted conditions which could not be kept, no matter how honestly the Indians may have promised. And again he saw the Ohio country overrun with several tribes who at last, tired of fighting among themselves, might unite against a common enemy, whose natures nourished the spirit of blood revenge, and whose warriors would live to wipe out the humiliations of the past.

The march was slow, the soldiers fatigued and hungry. McDermott slipped through the woods and struck the trail again in front of the column. He was anxious to get back; somehow he felt responsible for the safety of the Wilkinsons and that girl of theirs, what was her name?—oh, Charity!

Reaching the stockade he got two men to row him across the river. On the way over to the farther bank he sat quietly, answering the men's questions of the night's adventures as briefly as he could. And when the bow of the pirogue scraped against the bank he ran forward and quickly followed the line of the little creek which wound up to the Wilkinson's clearing.

Farther on he discovered prints of moccasins in the wet sand and was made uneasy. He tried to reassure himself with the recollection that Major Pike and his men had been thereabouts. He breathed thoughtfully, to catch a smell of smoke that might be in the air; but none came to his nostrils. Strange how stiff his hand felt—as though he had been gripping something prodigiously, when as a matter of fact he had only made a fist of it. . . .

Ahead of him he saw a corner of the field of corn, and his heart seemed to leap forward. Nearer, he dis-

covered that the corn had been trampled and the ears jerked off the stalks. He looked beyond: the little cabin roof was not there. He gulped and ran forward, breaking through the corn.

Before him was the charred foundation of the cabin, and near the step that had once led to the door was the body of Wilkinson in a curiously hopeless heap, the shoulders bunched up and the head quite bald and bleeding.

His knees wobbled and he dropped down. "By God," he said, "by God!"

IV

ANGUS McDERMOTT sat in a tall, carved chair in the antechamber to the room where Lord Dunmore conducted the business of governing the royal province of Virginia under the direction of his majesty, King George the Third. McDermott held his squirrel-hide cap awkwardly in his hand and twisted and untwisted his long legs as he waited there under the sharp, scornful gaze of a red-faced minion in lace and ruffles who guarded the royal governor's privacy.

Lord Dunmore himself was inside the great, carved door. McDermott, by twisting his neck, had seen him once as a short little man with rattling sidearms and spurs had gone in. He had been seated with his head bowed over a broad topped desk, and was scratching on paper with an extraordinarily long quill pen.

The short little man had come and gone and still the great door remained closed. McDermott saw no reason why he should continue to be excluded from his lordship's presence inasmuch as Dunmore had sent for him and now appeared to be at liberty. He would have knocked at the door had he not been restrained from doing so by the stare of the haughty guardian in the quantity of lace and braid. Even so he made uneasy efforts to get inside.

Looking from the closed door across the glistening, tesselated floor to the man who barred his entrance, he said: "Hain't nobody in there now."

The red-faced man lifted his chin still higher and told him, crushingly: "You will be infawmed when his ludship is at leisure."

Not quite crushed McDermott looked quizzically at the red-faced man and recrossed his knees. He could not determine what sort of person he had to deal with. His manner and dress indicated to McDermott, who had spent his twenty-five years among Indians and in far outposts of civilization, that he was a gentleman in authority. To offend him might also be to offend Lord Dunmore; McDermott did not want to do that, for he was more or less in the employ of the governor and had always been treated respectfully by him. Still, the man was pretty overbearing—now, for example, as he gave the lace of his cuff a lordly shake preparatory to taking a pinch of snuff.

The great door opened and Lord Dunmore's powdered head appeared. "Samuels!" he called sternly.

The man's hand dropped, whisking the snuff-box out of sight. "Yes, your ludship!" and he waited as though for a rebuke.

Lord Dunmore frowned.

At this McDermott grinned widely and grasped his musket, which the servant had tried to take away from him. He said: "Here I am."

Lord Dunmore ejaculated, "McDermott! Well, well. You made good time," and affably greeted him with a handshake. "Step inside, man."

They entered the large, high-ceilinged room together. Lord Dunmore seated himself before the heavy mahogany table which had been polished until it glowed. He motioned toward a jar of tobacco. "Sit down and smoke your pipe."

McDermott remained standing. "Chairs allus make me fidgit. I'll keep my feet."

Lord Dunmore smiled and brushed a crumb of tobacco from his shirt frill.

For a few moments they were silent. Then Dunmore said: "How is that wound of yours coming on, McDermott?"

"Tol'able," McDermott answered, and regarded him questioningly. He knew he hadn't been called all the way to the mansion only to have his shoulder discussed.

Lord Dunmore looked out the long window at the back which showed a sweep of grass and planted shrubs. "I need somebody to go out into the Ohio country on his majesty's service." He spoke musingly.

"I've been there some," said McDermott.

"Not as far as Detroit?" Lord Dunmore questioned.

McDermott laughed. "No, I reckon I hain't."

"But you could go?"

"Yes, I could go."

"It would be two dollars a day for you and his majesty's security of your person."

"Hain't frettin' 'bout my person none."

Lord Dunmore smiled. "Colonel Elliott, to whom the message is to be taken, needs a man to help him look after his majesty's interests amongst the Indians in that country, an interpreter well acquainted with their natures."

McDermott looked into his squirrel-skin cap. "Now who might Colonel Elliott be?" It sounded like the kind of job he wanted.

"Colonel Elliott is his majesty's Indian agent in the territory north of the Ohio; I think you'll find him a just man."

"Well," said McDermott, "where's the letter?" He picked up his musket and stood waiting

"It has yet to be written." Lord Dunmore lifted the

long quill pen. "Will you step to the door and have Samuels find Captain Varney?"

McDermott went to the door. Stiffly Samuels was standing near the main entrance. "Lord Dunmore wants Captain Varney—directly!" He grinned as Samuels scowlingly moved off.

The scratching of pen on paper continued. McDermott, dragging his musket after him, moved slowly about the room and stared profoundly at the picture pattern with which the wallpaper was decorated.

Tall, long-faced, and wearing a bright red uniform, a man entered the door. Without looking up Lord Dunmore said: "Varney, this is Angus McDermott. He's going to Colonel Elliott. Will you administer the oath of allegiance?" The pen paused, the quill pointing outward. "There is a Bible on the end of the table."

Captain Varney's heels clicked. "Yes, sir!" He gazed sharply at McDermott. Taking up the thick, leather-bound book he said: "Please hold your musket in your left hand and raise the right one."

McDermott moved his feet uneasily. He had never before taken any kind of oath. Confused by Captain Varney's briskness and the strangeness of the proceedings, he did as he was told.

"Do you solemnly swear and avow, . . ." began Captain Varney, in a voice so terse that he seemed to have been angered about something.

It was a long, puzzling oath, and contained much that McDermott found incomprehensible. But the gist of it was clear: loyalty to his majesty, King George the Third, a man whom McDermott had never seen, but doubtless a wise, and certainly a powerful ruler since he controlled the colonies, the Indian country, and

even Lord Dunmore was his subject. McDermott thought for a moment, then said: "Reckon I do."

Captain Varney appeared annoyed at this form of answer. "You swear it?"

"Yes," said McDermott after a pause, "I swear it."

Lord Dunmore carefully sealed the letter. "That's good enough, Varney. Never mind close formality." He looked up. "You can start at once, McDermott?"

McDermott replied by holding out his hand for the message. It was addressed to "Colonel Matthew Elliott, British Indian Agent, Detroit, Canada."

"If you can make your way safely to Detroit you should find it an easy matter to discover Colonel Elliott," said Lord Dunmore facetiously.

That sounded reasonable to McDermott. He said good-by and, trailing his musket, walked out of the mansion.

He went up the cobblestoned street toward a large red brick tavern, in front of which his mare was tied to a hitching-post. There she stood, a rangy bay with a long neck and none too stalwart shoulders; a sleepy look in her dark, rolling eye, she nibbled with bared teeth at a tussock of grass that grew up through the round stones. As McDermott approached she watched him intently.

He swung through the tavern door and reappeared with a pair of heavy saddle-bags, which he threw over her back. Untying the reins, he put one foot in the stirrup and settled lithely in the saddle. The mare lifted her head a little and followed the guiding pressure on the bit. Her hoofs clattered briskly out of town.

McDermott's face, usually so calm and unemotional, was hardened with an expression of anxiety as he rode along a trail that led out to the north and west. For

weeks the Ohio country had been in his mind; while waiting for his wound to heal he had thought of ways by which he could get there. He had thought of going trapping, of inquiring for some westward headed expedition in need of a guide. But trapping would have confined him to a small territory, and as for expeditions there seemed to be none setting out at that time; all he could find was a Methodist preacher who wanted to go into the Louisiana country. Now he was bound beyond the Ohio as a messenger and interpreter. This would have suited him better if one drawback to the trip could be disposed of.

It was this: his route to Detroit would be over the northwest trail, through the forests of the Wyandots, the Delawares, and Miamis, and perhaps other tribes of whom he knew nothing, whereas he wanted to go along the Ohio itself among the Shawanese. For it was these people, he was convinced, probably a family of them which had not been in the attack across the river, who had fallen upon Wilkinson's cabin and the territory allotted them by the Wyandots lay to the south and west. As it did not follow from Wilkinson's death that the mother and daughter had been killed, he believed that he might find them among one of the scattered families of the Shawanese. And this had been his aim for some time past.

He did not like to think of Charity Wilkinson's captivity. His own years spent among the Indians had not been disagreeable; he had been as a son and brother to them, sharing the game they killed, the food they planted, and the long bark houses in which crowds of them lived their crude domestic life. Later he had hunted with them, had played their games, and he knew that if she had not been killed she would be un-

harmed. But somehow it didn't seem right for a girl. And his mind made a picture of Charity and her mother pounding the corn into meal, gathering water to boil it, and picking up dead-wood for the fires—such work as was the portion of all the squaws. No, it didn't seem right.

And here he was, riding toward the north on a loping mare with a letter in his pocket for a man in Detroit! But at least it made the path to duty clear.

He got what consolation he could from that. It wasn't much. Autumn was at hand, already the leaves were turning and the brisk wind murmured through the trembling forest. Snow and the long winter were not far away. And much of the country through which he had to pass was strange.

He had his first sight of game that afternoon while fording a small creek where a turkey was preening itself by the water. He shot from his saddle and the turkey dropped in a flurry of feathers. Slinging it over the bags he rode on through the forest until nightfall, keeping the mare at a steady pace. Then, by a hollow log, he dismounted and let the animal graze while he gathered wood for a fire.

Hanging from a stick upheld by two pronged branches, the turkey roasted above the flames and the fat, at least all of it that did not sizzle in the fire, fell on a chunk of cornmeal and supplied shortening as it baked on a slab of bark beside the coals. McDermott squatted near by, his face to the flames and his back to the surrounding darkness. When the fowl was browned he seasoned it from a bottle of salt which he took out of his saddle-bag. He ate hungrily, using both hands. When he had finished he scraped the leaves from around the fire, stretched out beside the log and slept.

At dawn he was on his mare again, riding for the mouth of the Muskingum River, which he planned to reach that night. Some Methodist preachers who came from Moravia had a small settlement there among the Delawares, out of whom they were trying to make Christians. Though they had not been there a long time, they had not only kept clear of the stake piled with burning faggots, but had got a number of the squaws and a few of the braves to pray to God instead of to the dozen and more friendly and malignant spirits that they had gone to some trouble to please theretofore. McDermott was vague in matters of organized religion. As a boy he had been captured by the Senecas, had been adopted into their tribe, and while living with them he had been taught that there was a Great Spirit, a Sun Spirit who was a man and became angry if there was not enough feasting going on, and a Moon Spirit who was a woman, and the dayakene, that is to say the wife, of the Sun Spirit, and that besides these spirits there were a host of others capable of being influenced for beneficial or against evil effects.

That evening a little before sundown there was a stamping through the trees ahead and to the left, and McDermott held his musket in readiness. The sound came nearer while the mare waited motionless. With musket poised he saw the tip of an antler flash against the background of a golden leaf. He pulled the trigger as the full set of horns appeared forward along the trail. Not waiting to see where the ball had struck, he leaped off the mare and plunged through the branches with his hunting-knife drawn.

Shot in the side of the head, the deer had butted against the trunk of a tree, and was drawing back to run for safety when the hunting-knife slipped through

the flesh of its throat. It dropped to its knees, staggered up, then went down again as the slender limbs crumpled under. McDermott saw a kind of great-eyed pleading before it ceased to breathe.

When the deer had been bled he slung it over the mare's back and, carrying the saddle-bags and holding the bridle, walked the rest of the way to the east bank of the Ohio, opposite the mouth of the Muskingum and the Moravian settlement among the Wyandots. By that time another night had come, and he stood by the river's edge, halloing over the water. No lights shone from the opposite shore.

At last he heard an answer, nearly as faint and unreal as an echo. He gave another deep-voiced shout and waited.

Five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes passed. There was the ripple of a bark canoe gliding over the river to the bank, and from the darkness a voice, rather heavy and gutteral, asked: "Who iss there?"

"Angus McDermott. That Heckewelder?"

"Nay. I been Klingenfuss." The voice, it was of the younger of the two Moravian missionaries, paused. "Will you come across to us?"

"I will if you've got a flat-boat," McDermott told him. "I've got a horse."

"Ja, I bring one, you wait," said Klingenfuss.

Half an hour went by. The mare whinnied and there was vapor beclouding the river, steamy in the darkness. At last there was the plash of oars and the sound of a pole prodding the beach. The figures of Indians moved about, muttering among themselves.

McDermott got the mare aboard. She shied, sensing the water and the insecurity of the vessel. He tight-

ened his hold on the bridle, then said: "How's Heckewelder?"

A voice, very much like the first, said, "This iss Heckewelder," and a sturdy hand was put forth. "I come in place of Klingenfuss."

"Oh," said McDermott. "How are you, Heckewelder?"

Heckewelder answered with immense assurance: "Good!" He was silent a moment. "To see a white man is also good."

The Indians were sniffing about the deer. "Oskenotoh," said one of them at the oars. "Oskenotoh good."

"Oskenotoh for us?" another queried hopefully.

McDermott said to Heckewelder. "Sounds like you hain't been havin' much venison these days." He mused: "An Indian can go so long with an empty belly that you'd think he never ate at all, but set him down to a meal and he'll get outside of it quicker than a coon can skin up a tree."

"No," admitted Heckewelder. "We haff no powder."

The boat grounded on the western shore by the mouth of the Muskingum. It was made fast and, preceded by Heckewelder, McDermott led the mare up the bank.

A group of low built log houses lay against the dark, looming forest. Here and there a tallow candle made a pale spot of shifting light, and a voice murmured expectantly in the Delaware dialect. There was a stirring among the shadows as McDermott dropped the deer beside a bed of embers. Then Indians came stealing forward.

"Cut it up," said McDermott, and stood talking to the two missionaries while the fire was rekindled. He

didn't know what to say to them as a rule, for their thoughts ran in different channels from his. Their object was to Christianize, that is to say to call the Indian over several long ethnic periods, and make of him a respectably clothed tiller of the soil, dwelling in stout log houses and forgetting his aboriginal habits and forms of worship. This, McDermott was unable to understand. But to-night the matter of the deer gave them a common topic to discuss.

A topic, however, which was soon exhausted. While the blaze rose above the dead-wood brought by the squaws McDermott asked for grain for his mare. "A few nubbins of corn," he said, and Klingenfuss went after it.

They inquired of affairs on the other side of the river. He had nothing to tell them. News travelled slowly west of the Alleghanies. The deer was cooked and they all sat eating the dripping venison, the Indian braves dressed in long shirts which made them appear more naked than if they had worn no clothes at all. Afterward he rolled up in a blanket and slept.

He was awake before the camp had risen. In the gray light he saddled the mare and turned her head to the northwest trail, leaving the last white face that he would see for many a mile, perhaps until he reached Detroit. But he had often gone longer than it would take him to get to Detroit without seeing any one except Indians, and of them he had no fear.

That morning, like the others that followed, was cold. It was as if the sun's rays had grown too weak to penetrate the crisp leaves which every sighing puff of wind was shaking from the branches. All but a few of the birds had gone and the small animals, warned by the crackling sounds made by the mare's hoofs,

EXTENSION

streaked out of sight at his approach. Save for that a vast silence lay over the forest.

By steady riding he reached the end of the Muskingum on the second day and followed the trail that cut northward through the Wyandot country to the sandy shores of Lake Erie. At night he stopped and made his bed, raking the coals and ashes away from the fire on which he had roasted his game and sleeping where they had been. Successive dawns found him moving ahead on the long necked mare.

The council-fire of the Wyandots, Heckewelder had told him, burned on the shores of Lake Erie almost north of the source of the Muskingum and was guarded by the Wolf family of that tribe. He had hoped to come somewhere near it on the fifth day. But instead of finding it, or even the lake, at the end of that time he came out of the forest by the banks of a wide bay. The water was bright in the sun which shone from directly overhead, and the surface was scalloped by a breeze. He stood there, perplexed a little. The stretch of water was too great for the mare to swim across it, and as for going around that too was difficult for its expanse was equally wide to the right and left as far as he could see. The lake then, it came to him, would be up ahead and the bay was an obstruction on his way to Detroit. Pulling a little on the left rein he rode slowly through the forest in search of a place narrow enough for him to cross.

Half an hour later he came upon a tent made of poles and bark and thinking its inhabitants were Wyandots he dismounted. Going nearer he saw two young bucks sitting by the opening of the tent. They looked up startled as he approached.

McDermott said: "I greet you, friends."

Surprise left their faces and they became composed again, answering him courteously.

"You Annaresekwa?" he asked.

The larger of the two shook his head. "Pilawa," he said.

McDermott was puzzled, for there was no Turkey family among the Wyandots. "Pilawa no Wyandots," he said.

They placidly agreed. "Pilawa Miami."

McDermott nodded, having discovered that he had gone too far to the west to strike the lake. "This river?"

"Omee," said the larger of the two. "Pilawa all along river."

"Omee," said McDermott. He had never heard of it. He glanced toward the mare which a seamy-faced Indian was examining. "Where can the horse go across?"

From inside the tent came the resonant voice of a brave: "By big tree south of bend in the river."

McDermott thanked them and went on, passing a number of squaws who wound toward the camp carrying wood in the leather skirts which they held up before them. He crossed the river that afternoon and rode northward along the other side. He could not be very far from Detroit, for he had passed out of the Wyandot's country into that of the Miami's and as those that he had seen were not surprised that he was white there must be a settlement not a great distance away which trappers used as headquarters.

Late that night he built his fire on the west shore of Lake Erie and roasted a raccoon for his supper. From now on his path was well marked. He had simply to follow the shore-line to the river that led to the Detroit settlement.

The morning light lay full on the lake's ruffled surface when he awoke. Leading the mare down to the beach, he let her drink, then went on his knees and cupped some water in his hands. He climbed into the saddle and rode up the strip of glistening ground between the water to his right and the unbroken forest flaming with fall colors on his left.

The shore extended no great distance northward. By midday he had reached the river and was riding along the well-marked trail that wound among the great trees beside it. The weather was noticeably colder than it had been on the Ohio and a penetrating dampness emanated from the lake. Anxious to deliver his message and to find out what work Colonel Elliott would put him to, he would have urged the mare forward, but held back because of her stiff, tired gait. And he thought: it's a damn sight better to go afoot and tote your provender on your back! The mare ambled wearily on.

He came out of the forest at sundown and saw in the smooth clearing beyond the walls of a well-built stockade with blockhouses at the corners. The walls, he noted with an approving eye, were high and reared close to the banks; and at the south gate stood a sentry in a red blouse and cocked hat, his bayoneted musket by his side and pointing straight upward.

"Halt!" ordered the sentry.

McDermott reached inside his shirt and withdrew the letter. "How's that?" he asked pleasantly.

"Pass on!" the sentry stiffly answered.

Inside the stockade were orderly rows of log houses, a tavern, a flagstaff surmounted by the British flag. McDermott drew up before a long building which had an atmosphere of troops being garrisoned within

and tied his mare to the hitching post. He knocked at the door. It was opened by a soldier whom he asked: "Where'll I find Colonel Elliott?"

Briskly the soldier led the way down the hall to a side door on which he rapped respectfully. A voice, as if its owner were preoccupied with other matters, answered, "Come!"

The soldier responded: "A trapper to see you, sir!"

McDermott interrupted from the threshold: "Tell him I got a message from Lord Dunmore."

The name brought Colonel Elliott forth at once. McDermott saw a spare, grizzled man of about forty, wearing an unbuttoned jacket which showed a fine shirt, come striding forward. "Are you from Lord Dunmore?" the man asked sharply.

"Well," said McDermott slowly, "it was him as sent me," and held out the message with the seal.

Colonel Elliott broke the seal, saying, "Come inside," and led the way into his chamber.

McDermott propped his musket against the wall and stood waiting while Colonel Elliott's cool gray eyes scanned the long, angular characters in the letter. Suddenly the officer stood up. "So *you're* Angus McDermott!" He stretched out his hand.

McDermott nodded: "That's what they call me."

They surveyed each other over the handclasp.

"I must say I'm glad to see you," said Colonel Elliott. "The services of a good interpreter are of vital importance at a point like this."

"Is that a fact?" asked McDermott incredulously. He had seen nothing of very great importance at Detroit; it was no more than a well garrisoned outpost a few hundred miles farther into the wilderness than most of them. "Fight you much, do they?"

"On the contrary, our relations with them are most friendly," Colonel Elliott answered, "and we intend to keep them so."

"Hain't like that in the Virginny country," said McDermott. "Down there they fight 'most all the time. But then I reckon there's not so many settlers makin' clearin's right under the Indian's noses up thisaway."

"No." Colonel Elliott buttoned his bright jacket. "But you'll find enough to keep yourself busily engaged, I'll warrant you. Oliver," he called to the orderly, "show this man to his quarters. You'll hear the call for mess," he added to McDermott.

McDermott took up his musket and followed the orderly into a narrow, windowless room in an adjacent building. In the corner was a narrow bed with a blanket folded at the foot. He looked at it a moment, then turned to the orderly. "Suits me," he said, "but I reckon my mare needs a bed worse'n I do."

As the orderly took him to the door and pointed out the stables he asked himself wonderingly why there was so large a garrison maintained in a country where there was so little fighting. There would have been some sense of one down in the Ohio country, but up here by the big lakes . . . Of course they probably did a fair-sized fur trade, but then you didn't have to have soldiers around if you were a peaceable trapper. Why, they had drums and flags and everything up here in Detroit!

V

THE first snow fell and still McDermott had not gone outside the neighborhood of the stockade at Detroit. But while waiting and hoping for the chance that would take him into the southern Ohio country among the Shawanese he was far from idle. Time and again delegations of Indians made long marches to Detroit where the bright flag flickered its colors against the cold gray sky and drums beat out the formations of the garrison. They came to see Colonel Elliott about treaties and concessions and to buy goods from the general store which had got its supplies through the miles of waterways that led westward from Montreal and Quebec. Ojibways and Ottawas, Miamis, and Delawares arrived from their different directions and it was Angus McDermott who, standing beside Colonel Elliott, translated the words of the Indians and answered them for his officer in a semblance of their own tongue. That Colonel Elliott was making and deepening friendly relations between the Indians and the Great White Father far across the water was clear. And especially was this true of his dealings with those tribes of the Algonquin stock in the Ohio country. They were to understand that there would be no encroachments upon their hunting-grounds from the north. And this assurance, accompanied by solemnly given presents, pleased them so that they returned to their tribes and families well satisfied with their visit.

And there were besides small individual parties of Indians who came afoot or in heavy pirogue laden with

the hides of mink and beaver, fox and bear which they traded for white men's cloth, condiments, beads, tools, gunpowder and whiskey. There the stone age faced the age of iron and each gave something that the other hadn't. They came in small orderly groups and stood calmly impressed with the bright uniforms of the soldiers who, for their part, kept watch in the taverns that no Indians should get drunk.

These, too, McDermott spoke with, straightening out disputes arising from this profitable trade in furs and difference in outlook and custom and helping to allay their suspicions of the white men. And all the while it came to him increasingly that the Indians were bunching up in the Ohio country and that there would be trouble. For now and again word was brought by men of the fur boats or from trappers to the south that Lord Dunmore's war had settled nothing and that more Indians were being driven by settlers across the Ohio.

Meanwhile he waited for an opportunity to go among the Shawanese, telling himself that if it didn't come before the spring thaw he would leave the stockaded settlement and go journeying southward of his own accord. There was a driving responsibility in his mind toward that Wilkinson girl and her mother. Worrying about their safety for so long, he had come to blame himself for their predicament, whatever it might be. For was it not true that he could have compelled them to cross the river into the security of the stockade, and that he could have concerned himself more deeply with their safety after that first attack? It was not difficult to find reasons why he should go in search of them.

Still hoping that he might find some way of doing so, he was called before Colonel Elliott one midwinter

morning and found him talking to a stocky, round-faced trapper whom he had never seen before. The man was dressed in a leather shirt and coonskin cap, but his trousers were of cloth and he wore them tucked into heavy boots instead of leather leggings. At his feet lay a large, snow-encrusted bag, a hatchet and a musket. Evidently he had come some distance.

Both men, exchanging glances, arose as McDermott entered. Colonel Elliott said: "McDermott, here is one of the men from our stockade on the Grand Glaize."

McDermott and the stranger nodded.

"He has just come up from there," Colonel Elliott went on, "and informs me that the trappers and the Indians are in dispute over some affair concerning payment for furs. I presume if I sent you back with him you could straighten things out?" He looked questioningly at McDermott, then turned to the trapper: "I assure you, Spence, it's the best I can do. Whether they refuse to trade with you or not we must have this amicably arranged."

"That might be," Spence answered dubiously, "but I'd feel a deal safer about my scalp if you sent some soldiers."

Colonel Elliott's eyes gleamed with exasperation, but he spoke calmly enough. "Dead Indians can't hunt furs for you, Spence."

"No," said Spence, "but they can't kill me either." He stood up and took hold of his leather knapsack which he slung over one shoulder. "I'll go 'long now and do my trading."

As he left the room McDermott asked: "This Grand Glaize lay below here, does it?" and waited anxiously for the reply.

"A hundred miles or more," Colonel Elliott told him; "for God's sake try to appease them, McDermott. What those men down there have done I don't know, but they've angered the Indians so they refuse to trade with them and now they want to infuriate them even more."

"I'll look after it," promised McDermott, "but I reckon if I go down in that country I'd like to be gone a little longer'n it'd take jist to go and come."

Colonel studied him thoughtfully: "How much longer would you want to be away?"

"Cain't say," McDermott answered shortly.

Reflectively Colonel Elliott rubbed his long upper lip. "You'd be among the Indians, though?"

"Around the Shawanese."

Colonel Elliott said warmly: "Calm those Indians at Grand Glaize and I'll say 'very well' to your request."

"They won't be ornery unless some of 'em had got killed. They're right keen when it comes to vengeance."

"I've noticed that," said Colonel Elliott and sat down at his desk.

McDermott went out, first to look after his mare and then to buy some presents which would accompany the words he spoke to the Indians. He met Spence in the general store where he was trading his skins for salt, cloth, and gunpowder. Spence called to him: "I'm most ready to start."

"Jine you whenever you say," responded McDermott. "Y' come afoot?"

"Only way I could come. We've got just one head of stock, and that's a cow." Spence chuckled as he added: "And she's dry as a bone."

"I did aim to take my mare," said McDermott, "but

if the snow's this deep all over she'd plumb starve to death."

"Not far to walk—three days it took me."

"You lugged considerable furs, too," said McDermott.

"Yes," Spence gloomily shouldered the knapsack, "but I should have brought twice as many."

McDermott made his purchases and they went out together. As they passed the tavern Spence stopped. "I thought I'd warm up with a tot of whiskey before we set out. Need some to take along, too."

"A glass of rum'ld go right good," admitted McDermott, "but I most allus take mine out of a bottle; but since we'll be beholden to each other for comp'ny—" he laughed and they went into the tavern.

It was warm inside and the flames from a square fireplace brightened the whitewashed walls. A pine counter served as a bar, and as they entered a man with a huge back, encased in a shoddy coat, turned from a row of whiskey-kegs in the corner and said: "Gentlemen?"

"Whiskey for me," said Spence. "Is rum your preference?"

McDermott nodded. Wasting time like this made him uneasy; he wanted to be on his way. When the drinks were set out he drained his glass at a gulp and said: "Jine you as soon as I git my belongin's." He left.

When he returned Spence was sitting at the heavy table in the middle of the room. "Thawed out yet?" McDermott called.

Spence settled his knapsack over his shoulders and came reluctantly. As they tracked through the snow toward the gate where the red-coated sentry stood he said: "That's the first warm place I've been all winter."

McDermott blew out his breath into the frosty air.

"Reckon January's cold 'most everywheres." Beside him Spence's heavy boots crunched in the snow which had thawed sufficiently to form a hard crystallized surface. But his own feet, covered with thick moccasins, glided silently over the white ground. Though the weather was near zero he would not have complained if it had been still colder, for at last he was moving along in a direction in which he had been wanting to go for months.

Snow lay on the stripped branches of the forest, dead white under the pale, late January sky. The trees themselves stood tall and black above the ermine setting underfoot; everywhere, from the thickly frozen surface of the river to the great depths of the wood, was a chill stillness that was made more chill and piercing by the crunch, crunch, crunch of Spence's boots breaking through the surface of the snow.

"Hey!" said Spence, after they had gone some miles, "don't go so fast."

McDermott looked surprisedly at his companion. "Didn't know I was," he confessed. He walked more slowly. Despite the weight of his blanket and supplies on his shoulder, his back was straight and his footsteps noiseless. He swung ahead with his musket tucked under his arm and his eyes alert. The small animals had made scarcely any tracks upon the encrusted whiteness, but the careful scrutinizing to which he had been trained might reveal prints leading to the base of a tree, which would be a sign that a coon or a possum lay concealed there.

They camped that night near the river, brushing the snow off the leaves and kindling a fire from dead-wood and bark, on which they roasted a slice of venison which Spence had brought from the tavern. And in the morning they set forth again.

It was nearly midday and the river was widening toward its outlet into Lake Erie when they treed a coon. That night they camped on the west shore of Lake Erie, not far from the Maumee Bay. Ice lay in long slabs over the beach, the black waters swished sullenly and persistently, and from somewhere in the darkness echoed the dismal howl of a wolf; but under his blanket by the fire McDermott slept untroubled.

On the third day before dusk they reached the north bank of the Grand Glaize near where it emptied into the broadening Maumee, and saw the stockade lying by the bank against the purple background of the forest. McDermott stood still for a moment, looking at the wooded point that stretched out between the two rivers and at the low bottom-lands of the farthest shore where he could see rows of tents made of skin and bark extending long distances in both directions. He had never seen a larger village than the one which lay before him across the ice on the south bank of the Maumee.

"Come ahead," urged Spence and led the way over the snow covered clearing.

A trapper welcomed them from the stockade entrance, raising his hand in welcome. His first words were: "Fetch any soldiers?"

Spence shook his head and the man's sharp gray eyes contracted with disappointment. "That's bad! What in God's name does he expect us to do?" He looked toward McDermott.

McDermott said: "Colonel Elliott wanted the trouble should be patched up peaceful-like."

They entered the long cabin built against the south wall of the stockade. A fire was burning on a flat stone which was level with the planked flooring; there was

no chimney, only a hole in the roof through which most of the smoke ascended, and a tallow candle sent a dim glow through the drifting haze. Near the candle was a large-boned man with a great shock of hair and a jutting chin. He called, "Back early, Spence," and looked up to see McDermott. "Now who might you be?" he asked as he stood up.

McDermott dropped his pack and leaned his musket against the wall.

Spence, moving out of the shadows with the man who had first greeted them, answered for him: "He's the interpreter up at Detroit. McDermott, this is Rufe Arrowwood."

They regarded each other for a moment before shaking hands. Arrowwood said, "Have a stool," and motioned with exaggerated courtesy toward a bare spot on the floor.

Spence and the other man laughed.

"Stool enough for me," said McDermott calmly and sat cross-legged on the bare planks. He looked up at Arrowwood. "Heered the Indians don't admire to do any mo' tradin'?"

"Not with us, they don't," Arrowwood replied grimly.

"Act right cool to you, do they?"

"Scowl up black as a thunder cloud." The other man laughed nervously.

"Hain't had no set-to with 'em before?" asked McDermott.

Arrowwood shook his head. "Not in these three years come February."

"Reckon you allus traded fair measure?"

"That we have," affirmed Arrowwood.

"Ever trade 'em any spirits?"

"His majesty's got no law against it, has he?" demanded Arrowwood.

"None as I know of," admitted McDermott. He added: "Takes a powerful lot of caution to deal in spirits."

Arrowwood walked toward the corner of the cabin and pushed his heavy boot against a small pile of pelts. "Traded a bottle of whiskey for these skins here." He kicked irritably at them. "Then they came asking to be paid again!"

"That's the way it was," said Spence, "I was here when it happened. We let the shiftless beggars sing for it."

McDermott nodded. It was not like the Indians to act in that way; but nevertheless when he saw them in the morning he would have to speak to them as though they had demanded to be paid twice for the furs. For if he showed the Indians that he doubted Arrowwood they would scorn Arrowwood and the rest to the eighth generation. That was not what he was paid for. "See 'em in the morning," he promised.

After a meal of bleached corn and venison the men rolled up in their furs and blankets on the floor.

Early in the morning McDermott shouldered his pack and musket and went down the snow-clad bank to the ice. It was several inches thick, and firm. He walked directly across to the wooded point, skirted it and tramped over the Maumee, thus avoiding the thinner ice which there might have been where the channels of the two rivers joined. As he approached he saw smoke twisting up to the pale blue sky from the peaks of the wigwams and there were a few squaws at the river bank chipping for water under the ice. When he had come barely within hailing distance one of

these turned and hurried into a tent that stood a little apart from the others.

By the time his foot had touched the bank the two remaining squaws had retreated and the whole village was in motion. Issuing from the tents, they watched him closely and gravely, the children standing behind their mothers' skirts and the men with their shoulders squarred and their bodies stiffened.

McDermott advanced calmly, with a gravity that matched their own, but searching their faces to discover which of them was the sachem. It was a guess, but he chose a stern looking old man who had come out of the central tent and who had started as if to come forward. On him McDermott kept his eyes as he walked toward them. Some feet distant he stopped and held up his hand.

The old man raised his own brown hand, palm outward; but suspicion and a dull anger remained embedded in his lined features. Those who watched drew in more closely, instinctively forming a ragged circle about their spokesman and the white visitor. McDermott noted this without alarm. Slowly he unslung his pack and leaned his musket against it. His eyes on the sachem he began: "I come as a messenger of peace from the white captain, son of the great white father across the waters. The sachems of all the great Algonquins have long been at peace with the white captain," and here he pointed northward toward the stockade at Detroit; commencing to walk measuredly back and forth in the snow he continued: "The white captain has kept his treaties with the Wyandots, he has kept his treaties with the Delawares and he has kept his treaties with the Miamis and the great tribes who live by the gitchi gami. And the sachems and their people have pros-

pered from the white captain; for their furs he has given them control of the thunder to shoot the deer, coats to keep them warm and kettles that will not burn in the fire and beads that brighten the wampum." Walking up and down he talked for more than half an hour before he came to his point: "I have one word to say to you!" and here he reached into his pack and drew out two handfuls of beads, "the white captain is vexed with his dark brothers and children. His dark brothers keep their furs and look angrily at their white brothers across the Omee." He gazed toward the sachem and then across the river at the little stockade. "These tokens that come from the white captain say 'remain at peace.' They accompany my words." He walked to the sachem and handed the beads to him, scrutinizing him carefully as the old man took them. McDermott folded his arms and waited.

The old sachem stepped forward and strode thoughtfully about. "It is the truth you speak, my brother, it is the truth you speak. In very truth the white captain has kept the treaties and has given us many wondrous gifts. He has made the thunder to roar from our shoulders and the deer falls dead. The white captain has a great voice. It sounds through the forest and echoes over the waters. When he speaks the sun grows brighter and his words uphold our houses from the storm. The white captain has great eyes, great eyes has the white captain; he sees when his dark brothers and children are in distress and sends them presents. The white captain is just. He should punish his white brothers for cheating his dark brothers and children . . ."

Listening gravely to the sachem's talk, McDermott's eyes roved cautiously about the circle of interested faces among which one stood out distinctly, drawing

his gaze. It was that of a man about his own age whose black eyes glittered from beneath overhanging brows. The Indian was not tall, but lean and sinewy; his jaw was firm and there was a loftiness about his forehead from which his dark hair was sleeked back. "A warrior," thought McDermott and was pleased that the man regarded him with a not unfriendly stare.

When the sachem had ended his first reply McDermott stepped forward again. The Indians had nodded and intoned loudly in approval of what their sachem had said, and now McDermott knew the moment had come on which everything depended. He said: "The white captain is made happy by the favor of his dark brothers and children. When they smile his own heart grows big with gladness and when they sorrow he is sad. The white captain has great eyes. They see into the souls of his dark brothers and children. They see into the souls of his white brothers. If his dark brothers had been cheated he would have seen it. He would have been angered and would have smote his white brothers with the thunder. For many moons he has seen his dark brothers take their furs to their white brothers and get coats and thunder-powder, bright cloth and fire-water which the white brother gave them. He saw the furs that are now in the white brother's cabin; he saw the fire-water that the white brother Arrowwood gave for them—" pausing, he looked about the circle, his eyes resting an instant on a flat-headed young Indian whom he just then noticed and who plainly fidgeted and looked about as if searching for a means of escape.

"The white captain," went on McDermott sternly, "has great eyes. The sachem has said it! When white brothers cheat white brothers the white captain knows

it. When dark brothers cheat dark brothers the white captain's great eyes see." He stared hard at the flat-headed young Indian who would not meet his gaze. Striding back and forth he came to a halt before the young Indian. He resumed: "The dark brothers have a great spirit, Manitou. The white brothers have a great spirit. With a weapon worse than the thunder he punishes the dark children who lie to their brothers!" Standing above the young Indian he threateningly raised his hand toward the sky. "The white brother Arrowwood traded fire-water to this family for furs! If this family drank that fire-water may it make them happy. But if only one young Indian drank that fire-water may it turn into flames inside of him!"

The flat-headed young Indian's face was strained and pale. Desperately he looked about the circle, encountering ominous expressions. Suddenly he wrapped his arms about his middle and howled.

"You—!" said McDermott.

Howling again the frightened young buck leaped, and darting through the circle and between two tents ran madly into the forest.

McDermott stepped back and crossed his arms. "The white man has spoken."

The sachem came forward. "The white brother has spoken well. Some time white brother cheat white brother. Some time dark brother cheat dark brother. The white brother has said it. May there be many moons before the peace is broken."

The encircled Indians spoke together as if beginning a chant, "Ai-ai!" and nodded solemnly. Gradually they dispersed, going into their tents and returning with furs which had been stored.

As McDermott shouldered his pack the young war-

rior whom he had first noticed approached him shyly and stood looking at him with friendly, admiring eyes. After a while he asked: "You sachem of white family?"

McDermott shook his head. "White family not like Indian family."

The young warrior looked surprised.

"Indian family big, white family little. No sachems," said McDermott.

The young warrior pondered this. "You warrior?" he asked hopefully.

Again McDermott shook his head.

Appraisingly: "You'd be good warrior."

"I talk for warriors," explained McDermott.

"You talk well, just like Indians."

McDermott told him of his years with the Senecas.

"Ah-ee! My mother Mohegan. Little Turtle family."

"You don't talk Mohegan."

"I Miami, Mechekannequah of Miamis."

"McDermott salutes you, Mechekannequah."

"My friend McDermott, I go now."

"You don't live here?"

"I live Eel river by Kekionggay where Miami council-fires burn." He pointed westward. "Hunt by Omee."

Soon afterward they parted, Mechequannequah going into the sachem's tent and McDermott crossing the river to the stockade where some of the reconciled Indians were already gathering. As McDermott entered he drew Arrowwood aside. "Waren't any trouble that couldn't be patched up with a few words. Young whelp you give the spirits to drunk 'em all up hisself an' then got scared an' said you hadn't paid him anything aytall."

"What was wrong with that?" asked Arrowwood, "got his furs, eh?"

"There hain't much 'mine' an' 'his'n' with the Indians. Outside of their trinkets what belongs to one belongs to the whole shootin' match." He rolled up the things he had brought with him and primed his musket. "An' I'd go easy-like with tradin' spirits if I was you. Some day they're liable to drink 'em up an' forget they got paid. Then there will be a fracas."

Arrowwood nodded. "Goin' right back now?"

"I'm agoin' south," said McDermott, "an' I aim to be on the trail straightoff." His journey was just beginning; there was that girl somewhere to the south.

The three white men stood on the bank and said good-by. He left them and recrossed the river toward the south.

The Indian villages and the bottom-land continued for some distance along the shores of the Omee, but McDermott, instead of following along the ice, turned off on a trail that led more directly south through the snow-white forest. He knew that there were many nights between where he then stood and the westerly flowing Ohio River, but it was in that part of the country that he had to go and he was prepared to put up with whatever ill-luck befell him.

There was no doubt that Charity Wilkinson was somewhere in the southern Ohio country, always providing that she remained alive. For the Indians had been driven from the east and from the south banks, leaving them nowhere else to go. As for the forest to the west there were Indians there already, clear to the banks of the great Mississippi. This was a river that McDermott had never seen, he knew of it only what he had been told by men who had journeyed along its tremendous course. It rose somewhere in the north and wandered far to the south, emptying into a sea. It

wound and twisted and sometimes overflowed its banks until the whole country through which it passed was like a lake. But of this McDermott had no direct knowledge. He knew the forest where the Senecas lived and western Pennsylvania and Virginia, but he had seen no cities or great ships, such things as recent arrivals into the frontier told him about. His life was lived in the deep solitude bounded by the Alleghanies on the east, the Ohio on the south, the Miami's forests on the west and the cold lakes northward. That territory he knew well.

More snow fell as he plodded through the forest late that afternoon, a soft whiteness that sifted through the barren branches and hid the trail before him. He resented the new white covering on the ground, for now all tracks would be concealed, making it necessary for him to break into the supplies he carried or else go to sleep without having eaten at all.

That day the gray light darkened earlier on account of the snow. Stumbling over the bank of a frozen creek, McDermott stopped on the farther side and began scraping the covering away from the earth so that he could have a bed and a fire. Beside the blaze on which the falling white flakes sputtered he wrapped up in his blanket and slept. When he awoke and had brushed his blanket dry he set forth again, feeling more cold and hunger than he would have liked to admit. There were still flakes in the air and the sun was slow in making its way through the gloomy sky.

Late that day he shot a turkey. He roasted it over the fire built at nightfall. As the odor of the cooking fowl spread through the darkness there sounded a doleful howling of wolves and McDermott heaped more wood on the fire. He had never known anybody to be

attacked by these animals unless there was something besides the person himself that they wanted. Eating nearly all of the turkey, he threw the vestiges in the fire; as the smell lost its savor the howling gradually ceased.

After the second day from the stockade there were a great many tracks. Game was plentiful and at no time did he have to go far from the trail in order to find it. By stopping to build a fire only when night came and keeping it burning until morning he was enabled to travel swiftly and to live without too much discomfort. Before a week had passed he was not more than a day's journey from the north bank of the Ohio and determining to strike eastward toward the Scioto.

It was the morning on which he started in the direction of the Scioto that he discovered tracks that made him more wary than he had been at any time during the journey. He had broken camp as usual and had been walking about an hour through the soft snow when he came upon heavy prints that were settled deeply into the whiteness. They were made by a bear, he was sure of that; but what caused him to be watchful were the spots of pink which seemed to have been dribbled along in a line between the animal's heavy paws. A wounded bear, therefore an angry bear. And wondering what it had been shot with and by whom he pushed swiftly after it.

Through the leafless branches he could see for some distance, but there was no other sign of the bear than the tracks which McDermott followed. They wound unsteadily, down hollows and up, as if the animal could not decide which way to go. As he ran McDermott noticed the drops of blood growing larger.

He followed the tracks up a thickly wooded slope, staring alertly through the forest. But all at once the tracks stopped, led to the base of a small hickory and stopped. McDermott raised his eyes to the branches. There, hugging the main shaft of the hickory, was the bear, his little eyes glaring down at McDermott and his black nose wiggling with pain and anger.

McDermott lifted his musket and fired. Simultaneous with the report there was a splitting noise as the falling bear struck and broke a limb.

The bear struck the ground on all four paws and reared on its hind legs with a scream of rage. For a moment it was motionless, its tapering neck stretched upward, its tongue lolling inside its long, open jaws and its paws held forward. And in that moment McDermott unsheathed his hunting knife and leaped for that thick, tapering neck. The knife went in until McDermott felt the rough hair against the hilt where his hand rested. He jerked to stab again, but the knife remained embedded in the flesh and muscles. A paw ripped the sleeve of his hunting shirt and settled powerfully about his back and he felt that long narrow jaw gnawing at his skull. He swayed, braced himself. His right hand twisted with the hunting knife, goring deeply and with the other he reached for his hatchet. But the left arm was held fast in the grip that encircled him, crushing him breathless against the hairy chest. He writhed, feeling the blood drip down upon him, splattering his face and shirt. The coonskin covering came off, falling back of him. The long jaw grazed punishingly along his skull. With his lips bared he twisted the hunting knife and gouged. There was a red stream down the dark fur and the jaw above his head went slack. He felt himself swaying, toppling. The bear

from its heavy pedestal went down. He fell within its shuddering arms and lay there, watching it blubber and slobber, moving its head from one side to the other while the blood seeped out from two wounds and a great hole in its throat. McDermott crawled free. His fingers twitched, not daring to touch his skull.

He awoke to a noise above him. He turned. There was an awe-struck face of an Indian gazing at him from a respectful distance. Two others stood nearby, one with a musket, the other holding a bow and quiver, both agape with admiration.

"White man kill m'kwa, old m'kwa, big m'kwa."

McDermott sat up and explored his skull. Hair and skin remained. "Shawanese?" he asked almost immediately.

The three Indians nodded.

McDermott managed a faint grin. "You shoot m'kwa first?" he said to the man with the musket. "M'kwa yours."

They denied this. "White man kill m'kwa!"

McDermott cut short the polite dispute. "Indian's camp near here?"

The man with the musket pointed ahead through the thicket. "By river."

"We take bear to Indian camp," said McDermott.

They smiled and nodded, praising him.

Making a bark skid which they placed under the bear, they began dragging their burden over the snow.

VI

THE bear was heavy and there was little place on the improvised sledge for McDermott and the three Indians to grip it securely. Holding up the front strip, one of them tugged and guided the burden on the bark while the others pushed it over the layer of snow through which it made a wide, glistening furrow. It was slow work and McDermott was weary; he could still feel that long jaw grazing avidly over his skull and his arm was sore where the claws had ripped the skin. He would have rested but for the Indians. The ingenuous wonder with which they regarded him kept him going. That one in front, his eyes bright and his chest heaving, struggling heroically to show that he too was something of a man! And the two beside McDermott, muttering to each other and openly appraising the strength of the white warrior's arms and shoulders! McDermott knew from experience that this admiration would be useful to him when the Indian camp was reached. Having given him their esteem, the Indians would answer his questions without evasion and he might perhaps discover the names of the various families that held white captives.

They were near the camp when the sun broke through the sky, spreading a bright radiance over the snow-covered earth from which the trees with their great trunks and antlered boughs rose like ancient, primeval spirits. Down a long slope McDermott could see the glistening ice on the Scioto and the smoke rising from the peaked tents beside its banks. He turned his head toward the Indian on his left, a flat-

cheeked, dusky brave in long leggings and leather shirt who puffed and grunted as he pushed at the inert weight on the bark sledge. "You fetch brothers to help?" suggested McDermott.

Stubbornly the Indian shook his head and the others noisily agreed with him.

"We take m'kwa to camp for white chief!"

"Ai! Indians plenty strong, no need brothers."

And they fell to with renewed effort, the muscles on their brown bare arms standing out like whip-cord and their legs bulging at the calves. McDermott grinned to himself and said no more about their going for assistance.

Down the wooded slope the bark sledge slid more easily and McDermott looked ahead at the Indian village in which lived these wandering Shawanese. There were half a dozen tents in a row and over to one side lay several upturned canoes which were partly covered by the snow. But for the gray twisting smoke rising from the wigwam peaks the place would have appeared deserted.

As they came nearer, however, the village grew more lively. A young squaw, stepping outside of one of the tents, saw the slowly approaching figures and began chattering excitedly to the occupants within and pointing up the slope. And while the bear was still some distance away the bucks and old men, squaws and children came outside and stood in the snow while they watched eagerly. Some of the younger ones started forward.

They were greeted none too joyfully. The stocky Indian who guided the bark sledge muttered to them as they offered willing hands: "Go back to your warm

tents, you men with skirts on! Do you think we cannot carry the white chief's bear?"

"Squaws get wood while the hunter brings the meat," the flat-cheeked man scornfully told them.

They stood respectfully aside, looking from McDermott to the bear and from the bear to McDermott again as the small party slowly dragged and pushed the dead animal toward the tents. Proud smiles settled over the habitual composure of their dark faces, widening them. And from the village the children called shrilly: "M'kwa, m'kwa!"

The bear came to rest between the frozen river bank and one of the tents. Half the village gathered around it and exclaimed:

"Truly it is the great bear, father of all the bears."

"It is the grandson of our ancestor, greatest of all the bears!"

"Praise the bear that gives us of his good meat to eat!"

"Truly it is the white man's bear. With his hunting-knife he killed it!" said the flat-cheeked Shawanese.

They all stared at McDermott. He turned to the Indian of the party who had carried the musket and said to him: "It was your brother who first shot the bear and my knife that killed it."

The Indian thus singled out crossed his arms over his broad chest and making his face inscrutable answered simply: "The bear has been shot many times, but his spirit remained inside him until the white chief came with his knife."

A short Indian with a round head set close to his heavy shoulders made his way through the circle and examined the bear. After looking carefully at the gored

throat he authoritatively announced: "Truly it is the white chief's bear!"

"The sachem has spoken."

Again everybody turned expectantly toward McDermott. McDermott addressed the sachem: "My friend the Indian is hungry. Then let the Indian eat. The white man will also eat. Eat greatly of the bear that his sons and brothers may say to themselves, 'see! how well do the Shawanese treat us that they leave not a morsel on our carcase and are careful of our bones. Let us be eaten by the Shawanese!' And all will be at peace!"

Squaws in their skirts and blankets and braves in their leather shirts and leggings smiled gravely and applauded. Then the sachem answered: "The white chief has spoken well. He journeys into the Shawanese country as a friend. Let his voice become so powerful that it will be heard wherever there are Indians and let them heed his wisdom! Many times have our hunters sought the bear. He has always escaped them. But the white chief's knife was too swift and his arm too strong! May the good spirits never desert him! He gives to us the bear! Is that not like a brother?"

The circle of figures closed in tighter, eager to hear McDermott's reply and applauding vigorously. He began: "The sachem speaks wisely. May the words of his good counsel ring through the forest and sound over the waters. May his family—" he paused. Behind him he was certain he had heard a woman's voice, a voice not that of a squaw.

"McDermott!"

The voice was husky and desperate sounding and there was a familiarity in it that startled him. If it was—if it could be—it sounded as if it might be that

Wilkinson girl, Charity. But that name, the way it came to him . . . He wheeled and stared over the heads of the Indians in back of him.

A slender figure in a ragged dress and no stockings ran toward him over the snow, her dark hair falling over her shoulders and her eyes imploring. She came toward him as though he was a phantom that would vanish in another instant, leaving her again in despair. Astounded he called sharply, "Char'ty," and pushed the Indians to one side. The unexpectedness of the meeting and her wild hope of deliverance plunged them into a scene of intimate tenderness. "Char'ty, Char'ty," he repeated slowly, nonplused now that he had found her. He could feel her slim body shaking against him and he had a fear that she was going to cry. "Now, now," he consoled her, "'twon't do no good to take on!" and awkwardly patted her shoulder.

The Indians had gathered around curiously, but she looked up with shining eyes, demanding: "Come to carry me off, have you?" And doubting for a moment that such an incredible thing could take place after so long a time of waiting she said vehemently: "If you leave me here I'll die, I swear I will!"

His arm tightened protectingly about her. "I'll take you back! Nee'n' to be skeered of that. Why, I been lookin' fur you an' your mammy I don't know how long!"

She drew back so that she could look at him. "Have you now?" she asked earnestly. In an awed voice she continued: "An' all the time mammy was alayin' sick I was aprayin' you might come."

"She hain't sick now is she, I hope she hain't sick now?"

She went on dully: "She took sick airly in the win-

ter and died afore we moved here. Reckon it was her grievin' 'bout pappy that laid her under."

He shook his head. "I'm that sorry! Hain't been no time I wasn't thinkin' 'bout you an' your mammy an' wishin' I could find where you'd gone to. An' you all alone without a mortal to look out fur you!" Grimly he asked: "They hain't hurt you none?"

She said: "They've been right civil. Almost kilt mammy, the filth they live in! She'd say, 'Charity, don't you tech a bite!' An' I'd be that hungry!" Her breast grew turbulent at the remembrance of her mother.

He cautioned solicitously: "Don't take on, now!" Drawing her nearer, he turned toward the shrewd-faced little sachem. "How wisely the sachem has spoken that we should be brothers! The white brother has journeyed from many sleeps distant, always searching for his sister. From the distant country by the gitchi gami he has come for her. And now he finds her cared for by his Shawanese brothers! May the great spirit always give such wisdom to the sachem and his children. May the spirit of the sun shine gloriously on the sachem and the warriors!" Thus he ended. Then unslinging his pack he took out the remaining porcelain beads which he had brought with him from Detroit and handed them to the sachem.

Even before the sachem spoke he knew from the expressions of the surrounding Shawanese that the beads fully repaid them for the loss of their young white captive, sister of the chief who had killed the bear with his hands. Their faces were wide with pleasure and their dark eyes glinted covetously at the loops of colored beads which the sachem held in his brown hands.

Said the sachem: "The white brother's words have been heard. Truly his sister has been cared for. She has eaten of the meat brought by the hunters and of the grain from the summer's harvest. If she would go with her white brother let her speak."

For answer she moved closer to McDermott and he said: "My sister has spoken."

Satisfied, they turned once more to the bear and began walking around it and praising it. But McDermott looked down at the head of this strange girl and a constraint fell upon him. This was, he realized with a kind of shock, the third time he had ever seen her. And now the two of them were alone in the forest and a long journey from any other white people. What he was to do with her now that he had her presented a harder problem than finding her. For the latter, he had known, was only a matter of time and fair fortune, whereas the other was something the like of which he had never before been called upon to solve. Hesitatingly he asked: "If I took you across the Ohio into Virginny you reckon you could find your kinfolks?"

She looked away from him. "Hain't any kinfolks now that mammy's dead."

He said quickly: "Best not think so much of what's behind you." His jaw dropped and he stared perplexedly beyond the skin covered tents to the forest which seemed dismal despite the brilliant glitter of the sun on the snow-clad branches. No kinfolks! Made him feel like a coon on a limb with the dogs below and a hunter's axe swinging at the tree trunk. A girl on his hands! "What and the hell," as Simon Kenton used to say.

Abruptly he turned from her toward the Indians who were already gathered about the carcase of the

bear, near which a great fire was being laid. Squaws and braves alike were walking along the river bank after bark and dead-wood while the sachem and two warriors were making a speech to the dead animal whereby they hoped to appease its anger at being eaten. The sachem had gone into his tent and returned with a long pipe filled with lighted tobacco. And now squatting before the motionless head of the bear he thrust the stem into the animal's jaws and filled its mouth with smoke by blowing on the bowl. "Do not be a fool," the sachem told it sharply, "you know that our brothers and children are hungry! We held no grudge toward you; then you hold no grudge toward us! We love you and wish your flesh to strengthen our flesh and your blood to enrich our blood. Do not be a fool!" Thus having placated the bear so that its spirit would favor them in its next life, the sachem and the two warriors fell to work with their hunting-knives, ripping the dark, shaggy fur from the animal's fat carcase.

Watching them, McDermott forgot the presence of Charity for a moment. He was startled to hear her voice close by his shoulders: "They think that ol' bear's grandfather was the same as theirs, I reckon."

He nodded, disturbed again by the thought: no kinfolks! It meant that he would have to look out for her somehow or other—and that stockade at Detroit ten nights away! That was where he would have to take her. He had been away from Colonel Elliott long enough; besides there was no sense in carrying her to Virginia if she had nobody to look out for her once she got there. He sighed lugubriously and asked her: "You middlin' good at goin' afoot?"

She answered: "Hain't I traipsed all over these for-

ests with a passel of varminty Indians?" Her small hand took hold of his arm and she raised her eyes earnestly. "You lead an' I'll do the follerin', I don't care how far 'tis."

He said: "It's way up north of here. Clear to Detroit."

She asked: "Where might that be?"

"Like I told you, it's way up past Lake Erie."

She was silent for a space. At length she inquired: "That where you're fixin' to take me?" She smiled.

He thought that perhaps she wouldn't want to go to Detroit, thus upsetting the one plan for her that he had. "Take you wherever you want to be took," he promised.

Her only reply to that was: "I allus did hanker for strange places."

Silently he watched the sachem slice off a piece of fat from the carcase of the bear and go through the ceremony of offering it a portion of its own flesh. The day was growing warmer and there was the sound of drip, drip, drip as the snow melted from the branches. It was early February and there might be a little thaw, but even so the weather would be too cold for her if she wore no heavier clothes than those she had on.

He heard her say: "When are we agoin'?"

"Well," he answered, "the earlier we start the earlier we'll be there. Might go right after that bear gits roasted."

"I'm that anxious to leave," she said, "I could start this minute. To see 'em settin' around and agorgin' theirselves on meat that ain't half cooked an' eatin' innards an' things that ain't fit fur a dog to have in his mouth—makes me that queasy I don't know what all!

An' I don't aim to pass another night with a heap of squaws an' menfolk all tangled up so's you can't tell one from t'other!"

He said, "I don't want you should, neither. But there's good meat on that carcase an' I aim to have some of it afore we set out. 'Twon't be easy nohow, agoin' through the forest clear up to Detroit. Be a week afore we see a white man an' there hain't but only a few womenfolk after you do git up there," he warned her.

She exclaimed, "You take on like I couldn't look after myself. Hain't the forest that frets me, it's these plagued Indians. You take me away from here an' I won't complain a word, not a word!"

He said, "Nee'n' to worry about that, I'll take you away. I didn't come alookin' for jist to leave you where I found you!"

She squeezed his arm with quick affection and his eyes felt moist and swimming. This unquestioning faith of hers worried him. And he wondered where it had come from and what he had done to warrant it. It evoked in him that curious, goalless urge that he had had at eighteen when he became dissatisfied with his life among the Senecas and kept walking until he came to a white settlement. More than seven years ago, that had been, and now it was here again. A blind, indefinable longing was what it was, only this time there was a tempering of thoughtfulness and tenderness that there had not been before. And he stood looking down at her, wanting to stroke her soft, dark hair which was so different from the hair of the young Indian girls, all sleek and shiny with bear grease and tied with a band of laboriously and brightly colored eel skin.

The heavy odor of the roasting carcase permeated the air. The Indians were gathered hungrily around the leaping fire and the sachem was motioning for McDermott to come and share the feast and would have been offended if he had not done so. They would eat the bear to the last vestige on the bones in order to show to all other bears how much they appreciated them as food and the bones would be kept carefully intact to prove to these heavy, but agile creatures that they had better let themselves be caught by the hunters of the Bear family of the Shawanese who would respect them properly. McDermott and the girl (for the name of Charity did not come so easily to his lips as it had in the first moment of their unexpected meeting) joined the gathering of braves who sliced off slabs of bear meat which they and the squaws and children ate from eager fingers.

The sun had passed over the midday mark when they arose. A number of Indians still sat on the wet ground and gorged themselves. Being in a mood of satisfaction with life they gave McDermott what he bargained for, which was a pair of leggings for Charity and an extra blanket in exchange for which he offered the hunting-knife by which the bear had been slain and some gunpowder. But the hunting-knife they would not accept. After a solemn parting, they started off, McDermott with his pack and musket and the girl treading along beside him and holding the blanket which she wore over her shoulders.

Enveloped by the forest, they went silently over the melting snow that lay upon the trail. McDermott kept his eyes ahead and measured his gait to the girl's. There were ridges of worry between his dark brows and he was more conscious of her presence than he had ever

before been conscious of any other person. It was, he felt, as disquieting as if a catamount were strolling beside him. Not that he thought of her as being predatory or dangerous, but simply because she disturbed him so deeply that he scarcely knew where to look. He kept grimly still; behind him he could hear her small moccasins softly padding through the snow.

That sound continued during the long afternoon. Neither of them spoke. But when the red and golden sun set among the tree tops to their left, McDermott heard a tired voice: "We fixin' to walk straight on into the night?"

He looked back and saw discouragement and pleading in her eyes, but her lips drawn tightly against complaining, and he said, "I'll make a fire afore it's dark. 'Twon't be long now," and they walked on as before.

But as they tramped ahead the remembrance of her expression came to bother him. She had looked worn, there was no doubt of it. Maybe she had a blister on her heel; he had heard of people not used to walking getting blisters, though he'd never had one himself. Or maybe she was just tired and cold; people did get that way if they weren't used to the forest. And coming to a stream that crossed the trail he stopped and leaned his musket against the bole of a sycamore. She halted behind him and stood quietly while he drew his hatchet and went after bark and wood. When he came back with an armload he noticed she was chafing her wrists, and he told her comfortingly: "A little while now an' this wood'll be aroarin' as loud as a fire in the best tavern you ever laid eyes on." He thought he saw her lip quiver, but he wasn't sure, for blue dusk was wrapping itself about the forest. With one knee in the snow, it was hardening again now that the sun had gone

down, he took out his hunting-knife and chipped it on the piece of flint which he carried in his pouch along with the extra gun-wadding that made the blaze.

She knelt on the other side of the fire, holding her hands above the flames and smiling at him waveringly. "You'd be a sight farther along the trail if you'd been alone," she said.

"No," he lied without really knowing it, "I hit about the same gait when I'm by myself, an' like as not if I was alone I'd be settin' round the fire this time of evenin' jist the same."

They were silent as the forest darkened and the flames seemed to grow brighter. Around them the shadows were piling up, and from a little distance they could hear the icy trickle of the stream. It was strange and discomfiting to be sitting there like that. Having always travelled alone, McDermott had grown accustomed to a life of his own making. He had his meals when he chose and slept when he became tired, and though his destination was usually named by somebody else for whom he worked he nevertheless had always taken his own trail, and had followed it at his own leisure. But now here was some one looking to him for guidance, some one who was completely in his care. Bad enough if it had been a man, but to share his food and fire with a woman, a girl who was evidently trying not to displease him, that was not among his desires. How he had ever called her by her name in that easy way, and actually held her in his arms was beyond his understanding. Looking at her as she knelt there across the fire it did not seem possible that he had done so. And rising abruptly he said: "I'll fetch some more wood."

When he returned she had brushed the snow away and spread her blanket near the fire. There was no

doubt that she was without fear in being in the forest alone with him. For she lay with the covering drawn about her shoulders and looked as calmly at him as though he was one of her closest kinfolk. Curled right up like a child! He heard her say drowsily: "Reckon you'll keep the fire all night?"

"Reckon I will," he answered, "unless you want to freeze."

She said, "No, I don't hanker to freeze," then rested her head again and was silent.

Carefully he spread his own blanket beside the fire and lay down, looking up into the black, quiet night. Nine more days or even longer it would be until they reached Detroit. As he looked the stars came out, cold and glittering as blue diamonds on the blackest velvet. But they were friendly for all of their coruscating chill. How often he had lain watching them, the clear north star, the dippers, and the swimming milky way! Time passed and the moon shone through; round and with a ruddy glow, it was like a great plate dipped in phosphorus. And lying there he thought of the deer that would be crossing the stream through the forest and pausing to nose softly about for water where the ice had not frozen over from the day's thaw. He listened intently. That girl was breathing evenly and steadily, fast asleep already! To him sleep did not come so quickly on this night, and after a while he noiselessly arose, and taking up his musket he made his way along the snow-covered, spongy bank of the stream in the direction from which the slight wind was ruffling.

The forest stripped as it was, he thought, there was not much sense in going to the extra trouble of hunting at night when he could see for nearly half a mile in the daytime; nevertheless he went cautiously on, reason-

ing that if he caught his game while he was encamped it would save the time of hunting during the actual journeying. And besides a hearty breakfast would go well in the morning, and what remained he could sling over his shoulders and even then walk more swiftly than the girl.

In the moonlight there was a silver glitter on the winding stream. He followed it noiselessly to where it widened out into a shallow pool. He halted, crouching comfortably behind the trunk of a tree, supporting his musket on his knee and keeping his hands next to the warmth of his hunting-shirt.

After perhaps an hour of motionless waiting there was a sound of slow, nimble footsteps up ahead, and a long, graceful neck of a young deer calmly approached the shining water. McDermott raised his musket to his shoulder and took measured aim along the glinting barrel. There was a flash of fire and the slug of lead went whistling through the darkness. The deer plunged forward and her hoofs shattered the thin ice. McDermott dropped his musket and ran toward the struggling deer with his hunting-knife unsheathed.

He waded in and gripped her antlers as she floundered. Her slim legs kicked the icy water and her head shook violently from side to side as she tried to throw off this weight that was greater than her own. But the hunting-knife flashed at her throat; she gasped and made a final plunge. Then McDermott dragged her out.

Hauling his burden back through the forest he wondered if the sound of the shot had waked the girl and made her fearful. But she was still asleep when he got there, at least she seemed to be, for her eyes were closed and the low firelight showed a childish peacefulness on her face. He left the deer while he went into

the forest for more wood, and when he came back he set to work dressing the venison.

When he had thrown the waste into the fire and had cut enough strips of bark to hang the carcase from the limb of a tree not much remained of the night. But at last he lay down, knowing that there would be food in the morning and a good fire to cook it on. He slept, thinking that the dawn would wake him and that he would have the morning meal half cooked before the girl opened her eyes.

But the dawn did not wake him. It was full daylight when he awoke; there was the heavy odor of roasting venison in the air, and he was aware of somebody cautiously exploring his knapsack, which lay close to his head. Forgetting for a moment where he was, and surprised that somebody should have their hands on his belongings, he sprang up gripping his hunting-knife.

He was confronted by the frightened eyes of the girl, and so great was the shock of recollection that he laughed as he had never laughed before. To think that a girl could make him so fidgety that he would reach for his knife! He slapped his thigh and chuckled.

Her own expression cleared at once and she regarded him calmly. With a rueful smile she told him: " 'Most scared me out of my growth, grabbin' at that bloody knife thataway! An' now you laugh about it!"

His mirth collapsed and he became embarrassed. "I wouldn't hurt you nohow," he finally said.

She smiled a little. "Your breakfast's ready all but the salt. Ain't found it yet."

He looked at her surprisedly. "Well now, I reckon that's the first meal that was ever cooked me outside of a tavern." He felt grateful and somewhat abashed

that this service should have been performed for him. "Salt's in a yaller bottle," he said, and drew it out of the knapsack.

As they ate the venison she said: "Law, but salt tastes good. Ain't had none in a coon's age."

"Indian's hain't much on seasonin'," he admitted.

She lifted another slice of venison from the coals and licked the brown juice from her slender fingers. "Law, don't say Indians to me! Turn my insides that quick!"

He smiled. "Why now, I lived with Indians more'n half my life. Twaren't the same with me, not noways. I was raised up with 'em from a boy."

She looked at him pityingly. "Was you now! Wa'n't that shameful."

"No," he disagreed, "right good folks, they was. With every last Seneca it was share an' share alike. I was a sight favored to be adopted."

Charity leaned forward: "Where in conscience was yore folks?"

"Been kilt," he answered evenly. "Senecas come down on the settlement with their tomahawks, I reckon. I wa'n't only a mite them days."

She laid her hand against her cheek in horror. "Murderin' an' all that! You claim they ain't lower'n the lowest!"

"Why," he explained, "amongst themselves they hardly kilt nobody. Lived as peaceful-like as any folks I ever see, huntin' and aplantin' their corn an' beans."

"If you hankered for their ways how come you ain't still there?" she asked him indignantly.

He rubbed his forehead thoughtfully. "Well now. Well. Seem like I don't know, only one day come—eight year ago this April past—I was a young buck and I itched to do some voyagin' by myself."

"Law!" she exclaimed, "you mighta been there yet!"

He smiled gravely, beginning to pack up his belongings. They should have been on the trail long ago, he thought. "You 'bout ready?"

She stood up and shook out her blanket. "Whenever you say."

He cut down the venison and they set forth again.

And thus began the second day of their journey. They tramped until nightfall and when they made their camp it was she who cooked the food which they were to eat, patting the meal into little thin lumps and setting them to bake so near the coals that the drippings from the venison fell on them and enriched them. And as they went ahead over the desolate, winding path he came more and more to depend on her to do the things that he had once done for himself. First it was with amused tolerance that he watched her roast the sliced venison and bake the unleavened bread; it was as if he allowed her to do it in order that she might be humored. But one night—it was after they had made their camp and she had nearly dropped from the fatigue of the long day's march—he tried his own hand again at the preparation of the food, and it seemed to him that for some unaccountable reason the bread was soggier and lumpier than he usually made it, and that there was not the delicious savor proper to the meat of the wild turkey which he had shot early in the morning. It puzzled him, he simply could not understand it. And for a while he believed that the meal had lost its taste. But on the next night it was she that cooked, and there it was—the meal was as good as ever.

Vaguely he began to feel a curious alteration taking place inside him. It was something for which she was responsible, and it came to him keenly on the day that

they got within striking distance of the stockade on the north bank of the Grand Glaize near where it emptied into the waters of the Omee. Tramping along that afternoon with her small footsteps softly padding behind him he unreasonably decided that they would spend the night in the forest as before. He knew it was unreasonable too, for the only sensible behavior would be for them to go to the stockade where there would be a warm, dry shelter. But to tell her about this and to take her before those men, Arrowwood, Spence, and that other one, was something that he did not want to do. A deep, possessive instinct was struggling up within him, and he had a premonition of how uneasy and sullen he would be if he had to sit in that log cabin and know that Spence and Arrowwood were looking at her, surveying her, noting the fact that her dress was ripped and torn, sleeping in the same room with her. And he thought grimly to himself: "More'n likely afore daybreak I'd clip one of 'em alongside the jaw." At the mere suggestion of it he felt a thrilling anger and the wiry tightening of his muscles beneath his leather hunting-shirt.

That night, after being rowed across the Maumee in an Indian's pirogue, they laid their fire on the north bank of the river and slept as usual, one on either side of it. But in the morning as Charity cooked the simple meal over the replenished fire she was more than ordinarily silent under McDermott's gaze. And McDermott himself was restive, and could scarcely keep his eyes from her as she knelt beside the coals and attended the breakfast. Eyeing her so steadily and penetratingly, she flushed and turned uneasily away. And that increased his own discomfort and made him stare vacuously at the empty sky, at patches of melting

snow, at the brittle branches—anywhere except at her.

They began the day's march shortly and he swung stubbornly ahead and maintained his gaze to the north. Three more nights at most now and they would be in Detroit. Already it was the middle of February and he was anxious to report to Colonel Elliott. If he had been alone, he thought, he could have covered the remaining distance easily in two days, but Charity cut down his stride. Still, she had stood the long journey without complaint, and ten days was middlin' for the stretch of forest through which they had passed. No, he had no fault to find with her on that score; why, he'd seen men who couldn't have done much better.

Those last three days and nights were unbearable. He would look at her dress and wonder if the general store in Detroit kept clothing that would be warm and suitable for her. He had saved his money and had more than he needed for his rude wants; now he thought of the things he would buy her: store clothes they would be, good woollen stockings and a pair of leather shoes made by a cobbler, and a dress and a bonnet. And thus thinking about her he would be swept by an urge of tenderness and desire so great that he had to stride out of her sight to keep from taking her in his arms.

On those occasions she would toss back her hair and look away. Sometimes they would be regarding one another and she would say, "Well?" which in turn would make him answer, "Well!" and then one or the other would reply, "I hain't nothing to say," and then they would both stare confusedly in opposite directions. What a hangdog, foolish feeling it gave him! What an idiot he was to take on like this! A week or more now and likely as not she would forget all about him. Of course she would remain grateful to him for having

come after her, but even so he hadn't done such a heap for her. He had done no more than anybody else could have done. And besides it wasn't gratitude that he was looking for.

It was a bright morning of a continuing thawing spell of weather when they left their fire on the last day of their journey. The night before they had rested by the west bank of the Detroit River some miles north of Lake Erie. Silently they gathered the things that belonged to them and went on their way. He strode ahead and behind him sounded the light treading of her moccasins. . . . When in the evening he saw the colored flag flying above the stockade at Detroit he was not sure that he was so glad to see it after all.

VII

COLONEL ELLIOTT, his red jacket unbuttoned and his legs braced firmly, stood near the doorway. "McDermott, you rascal, I've been expecting you every day for a solid fortnight! 'Fore God, man, where have you been?"

McDermott strode forward and took his outstretched hand. "Been right closet to hell and gone," McDermott answered, "but I reckon what you're set on knowin' is how I come out down at the Grand Glaize."

Colonel Elliott nodded. "No doubt about that, McDermott, no—" he stopped short and looked in surprise over McDermott's shoulder at the threshold where a slender girl who wore a blanket about her shoulders, a torn skirt, and the leggings and moccasins of the Indian waited timidly.

McDermott also turned, and rubbed his cheek embarrassedly.

Charity's dark eyes moved uneasily from Colonel Elliott to McDermott.

"Ah! Oh ho!" Colonel Elliott burst out jovially. "Why, damme man, this takes on the aspect of a romance!"

Charity drew closer to McDermott. "Sho' now, captain, ever since we hit that portal we ain't had nothin' but fine-dressed people apesterin' us with their eyes an' adiggin' each other in the ribs as we went by. I hope you can treat a body civil-like."

Colonel Elliott smiled and bowed respectfully. "I trust, ma'am, you received no worse than the common penalties imposed on beauty!"

Charity blushed. "Law, captain, now ain't you gallant!" She took McDermott's arm.

"Am I to infer," asked Colonel Elliott, "that this young lady was the cause of your—ah—your protracted absence?"

McDermott sheepishly inclined his head. "I knowed she was somewheres north of the Ohio; that's why I asked you could I be gone."

"Yes, yes," said Colonel Elliott, "I wasn't aware that there were settlers in that part of the country."

"Waren't settlers," McDermott told him; "she was took by the Shawanese last fall when they fit Lord Dunmore."

Colonel Elliott's eyes widened. "From the Indians! Bless me, but you must have done a deal of travelling!" He looked at Charity with more concern. After a thoughtful moment he shouted into the hall and the orderly quickly presented himself. "A minute," he said and took up the quill pen from his desk. The pen scratched a few lines on a sheet of paper. "This is a matter for Mistress Elliott. If you will go with my orderly, ma'am——?"

Charity raised questioning eyes to McDermott. He nodded. Reluctantly following the orderly, she went out. The two men were left alone.

"Well," said Colonel Elliott after a time, "you were successful at the Grand Glaize, I presume?"

"You'd seen me long afore this if it hadn't been patched up," McDermott answered. "We done a deal of talkin' an' come to find out, Arrowwood had traded a jug of spirits fur some skins, an' the varmint that fetched 'em over drunk it up an' lied to the rest, asayin' he hadn't been paid nothing."

"So that was it!" said Colonel Elliott. "You did well to discover it." He frowned. "They buy liquor and trade it because it's cheap and the Indians like it, then after the liquor's gone the Indian thinks he has been cheated! Fie, but these trappers are a scurvy lot."

"Tradin' spirits, they come out the little end of the horn," observed McDermott. "Never seen it to fail." He became silent.

Colonel Elliott coughed: "You found the Shawanese disposed toward peace, did you?"

"Well," McDermott told him thoughtfully, "waren't nothing that they should be warlike about. But then I wa'n't settlin' on their ground. If I'd been settlin' on their ground like as not there'd been a tussle."

"The—the young woman; who is she, McDermott?"

McDermott shifted uncomfortably. "Name's Char'ty Wilkinson. Her pappy was a settler an' got kilt by the Indians like I warned him. Shawanese took her an' her mother along when they moved west, an' her mother up an' died on the journey. She claimed she had no kinfolk; wa'n't nothing to do but bring her along."

"Quite right," said Colonel Elliott. Reflectively he added: "But now about the settlers, McDermott. If you'd been a settler the way they treated you would have been another tale, eh?"

McDermott answered slowly: "They've got a right powerful grudge agin all settlers along the Ohio. The Shawanese hain't forgot last fall, not by a long ways." He paused and took up his musket. "I've talked a spell, now what's there for me to do?"

"I'll call you when I need you. Rest yourself, man, I'll find something for you all in good time."

McDermott laughed good humoredly and, going to his room, sat on the edge of the narrow bed and

scowled at the whitewashed wall. It was not rest he needed, it was some kind of action that would settle his disturbed mind and bring him back the peace he had enjoyed before he went forth on that journey to the Shawanese. And he thought resentfully of how he hadn't been able to call his soul his own ever since the day he and Charity had approached the stockade at Grand Glaize. Those days when he had been with her were bad enough, he told himself, but now that he had got her to Detroit it was even worse. From the instant they had reached the gate he had wanted to get away from her, to let somebody else have the care of her now that she was safely among white people. He had no place to put her and no way of looking after her, and it was with a breath of deep relief that he heard Colonel Elliott send her to his own house to be given into the charge of Mistress Elliott.

But now that she was gone he missed her and wondered what she might be doing. No telling but what these soldiers with their fine red jackets would turn her head, abowin' and ascrapin' and acallin' her a beauty the way Colonel Elliott had done! Not that she wasn't a beauty; she probably was—she had right big eyes and he'd never seen hair any prettier—but what business was that of Colonel Elliott!

After a while he arose and began counting the gold and silver coins which came to him from the chest of his majesty, King George the Third. And having decided that he had as many of them as he needed at the moment, he went out of the building and diagonally crossed the frozen mud road to the general store. Luckily for him there was nobody but the proprietor inside to laugh at the sight of a man in buckskin buying finery for a woman; and stepping up to the plank

counter he said: "I want some store clothes, the kind womenfolk wear."

The proprietor, a sandy, gravely bearded man, included all of the shelves in the slow, circling gesture of his arm. "There's linen, cotton, wool and finestuff. Speak your preference and I'll set a bolt on the counter."

McDermott stared vacantly from the proprietor to the shelves. "Lord," he confessed, "one's the same as t'other to me. You jist pick one out and name the price."

But the proprietor shook his head. "Your pardon, but 'twould never do at all. Women-folk have a way of being particular." Surveying McDermott with a kindly smile he continued: "If I cut off a bolt of woolstuff and the lady wanted silk I'd be blamed for a booby."

McDermott looked at him in bewilderment. "Sho' now, is there all that difference? Then I reckon I'll jist take the shoes."

"It's my advice," said the proprietor as he moved along the counter. "Boots for yourself, d'you want?"

"For a—for a girl," said McDermott.

"How big?"

McDermott measured uncertainly with parted hands: " 'Bout that big, I reckon."

But again the proprietor shook his head and commented drily: "You'd better find out what the lady wants and then come back."

By this time McDermott was not only bewildered, he was stupefied; and turning around he lumbered out of the store without another word.

On the muddy road he stood in the sunshine, gathering his wits as he watched the sparks flying from the anvil by the open door on the other side where a

blacksmith was making ready to take a horse's hoof between his knees. It seemed inconceivable that there should be so great a choice of material for such a simple thing as a dress! That was another complication brought about by the female world! Lord, there was no end of trouble in it, he told himself.

But a moment later, despite the approaching evening, he was striding up the deeply rutted road toward the two-story hewed log house where Colonel Elliott and his family lived and where he expected to find Charity Wilkinson. His excuse, for he had already found it necessary to invent one, was that he wanted to ask her about this puzzling matter of clothes.

He rapped on the heavy door and waited. After a while there were steps on the floor inside; the latch was lifted and there stood the colonel's wife, pale, large-boned and with dark, questioning eyes. She said, "Ah, Mister McDermott," in a way that might have been warm or cold, he couldn't tell which.

Standing before her he could find nothing to say. He could see that she was surveying him impatiently and that her gaze finally settled on a point somewhere above his forehead. What was she looking at in that hoity-toity fashion? Oh—his coonskin cap. He jerked it off and said, "Mis' Elliott I come to ask about Miss Char'ty Wilkinson. She feels right well, I hope?"

"Very well indeed, Mister McDermott." Mrs. Elliott's brows played jumpily above her stern, unwavering eyes.

"Uh," McDermott began once more, "uh, Mis' Elliott, I been studyin' how she hain't, as you might say, got the right clothes for this part of the country. Sort of reckoned I might git a dress for her from that general store down there."

"That will be taken care of, Mister McDermott."

He could see the logs burning in the wide fireplace and the massive chimney inside the room; it was chilly outside, but it seemed that she had no intention of letting him come in. "Well now, I promised myself Mis' Elliott to see that she had some clothes an' I went to that store——"

Mrs. Elliott cut him short with: "That has all been attended to, Mr. McDermott."

He made a final attempt, knowing that if it failed he would have to go without having seen Charity after all. "Well now," he began.

But this time he was interrupted by another voice; it was Charity's and he brightened as he heard her say, calling from up-stairs: "Angus, you come 'round an' see me to-night. Cain't be seen right now."

Unconsciously he grinned in triumph at Mrs. Elliott and shouted to Charity that he would be there after the supper hour. As the door closed he turned toward his room in the long house down the road nearer the stockade entrance.

He found himself waiting keenly through the miserably dragging hours. Mrs. Elliott's coldness had put an edge to his desire; Charity's way of making her own will felt above that of her hostess seemed to draw her nearer to him, and when the time came for him to go he stepped forth with a youthful briskness that he had never known before.

The Elliotts and Charity sat in tall, straight chairs before the blazing fire as McDermott entered. Colonel Elliott was jovial, Mrs. Elliott disdainful and as for Charity he scarcely recognized her. From her chin to the tips of her toes she was encased in a dress that fitted tightly about her waist and bodice only to flare

out voluminously in the skirt. Her hair had been done up and, though he could not see them, he had no doubt she wore slippers and stockings.

Colonel Elliott invited him to sit down and walked over to the heavy sideboard opposite the fireplace. "I'll have the pleasure of making you a toddy, McDermott, while you entertain the ladies."

But unless the ladies found entertainment in McDermott's embarrassed silence they found none at all. The stiffness, the need to make talk that said nothing was unfamiliar to him and he sat as if he had been struck dumb, looking uneasily at Charity.

The toddy brought a little geniality into the room, but not much headway could be made against the disapproving expression of Mistress Elliott. And as he sat there McDermott began to wonder why it was that the colonel's wife was keeping him and Charity apart, dressing her up like that and frowning whenever he looked at the girl. And after his second toddy he determined to stay until he found out. Time passed. The Colonel and McDermott talked. Mrs. Elliott yawned.

Mrs. Elliott said to Charity: "Ain't you sleepy, child?"

McDermott watched Charity with close jealousy. She answered, "No, ma'am, not nohow," and looked brightly toward Colonel Elliott who was telling McDermott of a hunting dog which he had recently purchased.

But Mistress Elliott arose, setting Charity's denial aside. "Time you were retiring to your chamber," she said firmly.

"—an excellent bitch—" Colonel Elliott was saying as he stood up. "McDermott, we'll bid the ladies a good night."

Mistress Elliott nodded curtly and climbed the steep, rough-hewn stairs. Charity followed, and McDermott was left disappointed and confused.

Colonel Elliott set the kettle on the hob. "We'll have another toddy before you go; sit down." In a moment he had begun again on the subject of dogs.

McDermott listened gloomily.

"Well," said Colonel Elliott as they drank their toddies, "we'll have another chat soon, eh?"

McDermott lifted his cap from the floor. "Why yes, Colonel, I reckon so."

He went out slowly into the chilly night. The moonlight showed great spaces in the sky and piles of clouds in shifting pyramids. But as he faced the sharp west wind he felt nothing of the wonder above him for Charity had not asked him to come again and Mistress Elliott was as impassable as a dragon.

A few paces from the house he paused to look once more at the roof and walls and darkened windows which sheltered Charity. And as he looked his eye was caught by a flicker of shadowy white from the northwest room up-stairs. He stopped, intent and motionless. Somebody was leaning out and beckoning. It could be no one but Charity! She was waving a last good night! Now wasn't that . . .

While he waited the phantom disappeared. He was about to walk on when he heard the door open and softly close. In that long, billowy dress and with a blanket about her shoulders, she came running toward him.

They faced each other in the moonlight and he felt his arm tremble as she slipped her warm hand beneath it. She gazed anxiously up at him and said: "Y'ain't mad, air you, Angus?"

He told her huskily: "Hain't no way you could make me mad!"

She went on, tightening her hand about his arm, "'Cause 'twaren't my fault. Mis' Elliott thinks it's plumb scandalous, our traipsein' through the forest alone thataway. Says we'd best keep away from each other for a while."

They walked slowly away from the house. "That why she had her nose up in the air?" he asked.

"Said I needed a body to look after me," her voice came huskily out of the darkness.

He leaned toward her: "You know I wouldn't hurt you none."

Their bodies swayed against each other as they walked. She said dreamily: "When I'm with you I feel that safe!"

As if he hadn't heard her he said: "They's a heap of fine bright coats around here; reckon you'll be aseein' 'em an' they'll be amakin' up to you afore long. You in your new store clothes."

"This ol' dress?" she said, "Mis' Elliott wore it when she was a girl."

Beside him he felt steps lagging. She stopped and looked upward: "Ain't that moon aridin' high to-night?"

But he turned away from the moon and stared hard at the dark silhouettes of the log buildings across the road.

"Ain't it? It's right pretty. Why don't you look?"

His voice was strained with longing as he explained: "I've got too great a hankerin' to kiss you."

Her lips trembled: "Don't kiss me."

"No," he said dully.

But as they spoke they faced each other and he

felt the warmth of her slender body, saw the mysterious lights and shadows of her eyes and felt the wonder of her moist, quivering mouth. Emotions tumbled over one another inside him, tenderness, protectiveness, pity and a sharp, stabbing longing. "Char'ty . . . Char'ty," he whispered chokingly as he tightened his arms about her and leaned far over her, kissing her eyes, her cheeks and her white throat.

After a while she disengaged her arms from about his neck and staring up at him she said with a sobbing laugh: "Law, it took you a spell to make up your mind."

He laughed exultantly and drew her toward him again. "I reckon I'll see you now, Mis' Elliott or no Mis' Elliott."

She cautioned, "She'll have me singed an' scalded if she ketches me out like this. Let go."

Domineeringly he looked down at her: "Anxious to get back, air you?"

She nodded.

"Sho'," he laughed, "I'll get you back in no time," and sweeping her in his arms he ran easily with her toward the house while she murmured: "I'll scratch an' claw like a catamount if you don't lemme down."

But at the door she paused and said: "Well?"

He reached towards her. "Well?"

She put out her hands against his chest. "Ain't you forgot something?"

He wondered what it could be.

She stamped her foot with assumed anger. "Man so dumb the girl has to say it for him an' shame herself to death!" She looked at him vexatiously: "If you love me why cain't you say so, like any mortal?"

Surprised, he said sincerely: "Why I thought sure you knowed that!"

She sighed resignedly: "Some folks' manners!" And kissing him so scantily he was not sure whether he had felt her lips or not she disappeared behind the closed door.

McDermott walked slowly to his room and now he could see the moon; it swam buoyantly between the purple sky and the piles of white clouds.

And during those late winter days that followed it was this moonlight playing over the clouds and the kiss of Charity that became more real to him than the world in which he actually moved, the world of long journeys among the Indians, continual hardships and lonely paths. He saw her frequently and the more he was with her the less he wanted to be away from her. And even when he was by himself he would identify her with the wondrous sight that met his eyes, the sun sparkling on the lake at the foot of the stockade, the curve of the river bank and the many colored stains in the evening sky.

It was not long until they were avowed lovers, for deceit was not much in the nature of either of them. And as soon as Mistress Elliott discovered that Charity had chosen him her attitude toward him changed; she grew a little less disapproving and manipulated the two of them into setting the date of their marriage for the last of March. To McDermott it seemed that she had done this solely to keep him farther away from Charity, for from the moment the time of the wedding was fixed Mistress Elliott had ever at hand some pretext by which she prevented him from seeing Charity. A girl on the point of marriage, Mistress Elliott claimed, was at a very critical stage in her career and

needed rest and quiet, especially from the sight of her intended.

But Colonel Elliott was more helpful. He had congratulated McDermott by saying, "Well, well, we all come to it sooner or later, so don't let it be too much botheration to you. And if you'll need a place to live by yourselves I've taken the liberty of putting a few articles of furniture in that empty cabin that the rascally Jesuits used to occupy."

Meanwhile McDermott went about his work. Sometimes he would be gone for several days, in the course of which he would become conscientious, telling himself that a man who had to be away so often and so long was no kind of husband for a girl to have, but always when he came back he would find Charity waiting for him and in the joy of their reunion all doubts would disappear.

Once, a week before their marriage, he tried to tell her of this feeling. "Char'ty, you reckon you'll be unhappy, my bein' gone so much?"

She was sewing and she looked up to say: "I'll allus be there to welcome you, Angus, makes no difference how long we're apart."

"But it ain't right to leave your lawful wife as much as I'll have to do," he continued, trying to make clear to her what loneliness she would have to expect and thus ease his own conscience.

But as he spoke her face grew strained and white and looking at him with hurt, bewildered eyes she asked: "You ain't growed sick of our bargain, have you?"

He hastily answered: "Lord knows I ain't." And taking her in his arms he tried to comfort her. It was a lesson that he thought it well to remember.

They were married by a chaplain in the Elliott's front room on the appointed day and there were no other witnesses than the Colonel and his wife. Charity, meek and wistful, and McDermott, uncomfortable in a high stock and linen shirt, stood before the preacher as he read questions out of a small, black book and scarcely paused for the answers from the four people standing in a half-circle in front of him. "I do," said McDermott solemnly; "I do," said Charity Wilkinson and their hands were clasped as the chaplain's voice rolled out to the effect that "Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

There was a wedding-supper of beef and dumplings, puddings and wine. Colonel Elliott beamed ruddily and his wife, stiff and pleasantly tipsy in her high-backed chair, proclaimed yet another toast to the success and happiness of this new family. But McDermott and Charity sat quietly looking at each other. "Husband and wife, husband and wife," the words hummed in a giddy circle inside McDermott's head and he thought of how deeply he would cherish her through their long years together.

In the early spring evening they left the heavily laden board and crackling fire of the Elliott's and went over the muddy ground of the stockade to their first home. A mild flurry of snow, the last of the season, made white, elusive dots in the deepening darkness. Before the door McDermott kissed her, then carried her over the threshhold into the one-room cabin.

"I'll light the fire, laid it this afternoon," he said, scarcely able to keep his voice at a steady tone.

She watched serenely while the flames leaped up through the kindling with a muffled roar and the light from the fireplace brightened the cabin. There was a

bed with quilts covering it, two stools, a pot and kettle and a few dishes in the cupboard which had been the wedding present from the Colonel. "Ain't it grand!" she sighed peacefully.

And taking her in his arms he said, "Hain't nowhere near good enough fur you. I aim to make a table an' a chair that you kin set by the fire an' rock in."

She rumpled his hair and there was a faint noise in her throat like a dry sob. "Don't seem real," she said, "seems like two other folks was settin' here, ahavin' all this happiness an' I was still totin' wood an' water for them varminty Indians."

He answered thoughtfully, "I should 'a' seen you was safe 'way back there. Had my mind set on it, but first thing I knowed the Shawanese was besiegin' us an' there wa'nt no way of gittin' you across the river."

She shook her head. "Pappy wouldn't 'a' heered to it. He allus claimed a man that couldn't look after his own family hadn't no right to live, nohow." After a time she said: "But I feel right safe now, reckon these arms of your'n 'd make any mortal safe if you hadn't your temper up."

They kissed again. But after a while she drew away and asked shyly: "Mightn't we have an armload of wood for the morning?"

Releasing her, he took up the axe and went out. It was good, he thought, as he swung the sharp faced axe into one of the corded logs, to be cutting up fuel to warm somebody beside himself; it made him want to whistle.

When he returned there was nobody before the fire. Not seeing her, he was startled and he called in a nervous voice: "Charity!"

From the corner of the cabin where the bed stood came the reassuring words: "Here I am."

He said, "Oh!" and the armful of wood tumbled clatteringly on the bare floor.

VIII

EACH day the sun grew warmer. The ground thawed, deepening the rivers, and along the banks and under the dead leaves of the forest bright grass blades pushed their way up into the light. Everywhere was the smell of budding trees and bushes rich with sap, sprouting long tendrils. Birds were heard again, loud and shrilly clamorous. And through this month of April Angus and Charity McDermott worked in the field that lay outside the stockade. In the evenings they sat by the fire and talked while Charity sewed. Angus had made her a table and a rocker; she wanted a spinning-wheel and he was going to buy her one. . . . It seemed as if there was nothing they really needed and could not get. There would be corn in the summer, squash and cabbage in the fall and Angus' musket kept them supplied with more game than they could eat. Living harmoniously, it was as if their contentment would last forever.

They lived in this security for more than a month. During that time McDermott was not once called upon to leave the stockade. He earned his two dollars a day by presenting himself each morning before the Colonel and waiting there until midday in case any Indians arrived. But their visits were few that spring and the complaints they brought concerned only individuals, not tribes. There was so little for him to do that he grew doubtful of whether he should accept the money thus paid through Colonel Elliott by that far distant person, his majesty, King George the Third.

But one morning McDermott came to the Colonel's

room and was stopped at the threshold by the orderly who told him: "Colonel said nobody was to come in."

McDermott drew out his pipe and waited in the hall. On the other side of the door he could hear Colonel Elliott and a stranger talking, not loud, but with a curious sharpness in their tone. McDermott looked questioningly at the orderly.

For a moment the orderly's eyes bulged as if he were about to impart some extraordinary information to McDermott, but apparently he thought better of it, for he tightened his lips and began pacing up and down between the outer door and the door to the Colonel's chamber.

Listening, McDermott heard fragments of talk which made him want to hear more.

"How long ago was this?" It was Colonel Elliott's voice.

"I came directly, sir." That was the stranger, evidently a messenger.

"Fired on them, you say?"

He did not hear the answer to that.

But Colonel Elliott was saying: "Is it spreading, d'you know?"

There was another silence, then the sound of boots on the floor and the door was opened. A lean-faced messenger stood waiting for Colonel Elliott to dismiss him. The Colonel's eyes were bright and his cheeks looked hot. He called to the orderly, "Show this man to the tavern and return at once," and then turned to McDermott and told him briefly: "Step inside."

McDermott went in and stood by the writing-table, watching Colonel Elliott stride about the room, his hands clasped behind his back and his jaw set in anger.

"Well," Colonel Elliott said at length, "they've done it at last!"

McDermott waited to discover what had been done by whom.

Colonel Elliott fumed on: "They'll find they've done it to their cost, mark me if they don't! Why, damn my soul if they and their Congress wouldn't defy the British Empire!"

Thinking that the Colonel's anger had subsided for a space, McDermott asked cautiously: "Whose Congress is adoin' all this, Colonel?"

Colonel Elliott sat down abruptly and picked up the letter which the messenger had brought him that morning. It had the seal of the Governor of Canada and was now being read for the third time since its receipt. Reaching the middle of the page, Colonel Elliott glared upward at McDermott: "Why, the damned rebels, man!"

McDermott pondered this remark. "Damned rebels" meant to him but two words. He asked: "Now who might *they* be?"

Colonel Elliott shook the paper and wrathfully cleared his throat: "They're a set of damned rascals who've defied the authority of King George!"

Still unenlightened, McDermott inquired casually: "They amarchin' on us, air they, colonel?"

"That they're not!" his officer told him vigorously.

"Well," if they weren't threatening Detroit McDermott could not see why the Colonel was so upset, "you need me now?"

"I'll send for you," said Colonel Elliott.

McDermott went out. Down by the gate the British flag was blowing in the soft May breeze. He crossed over to his cabin where he found Charity pulverizing

meal in a large bowl. Leaning against the wall and drawing thoughtfully at his pipe he told her: "Been a messenger here to say there was fightin' agoin' on."

She frowned. "Them varminty Indians," she began.

He said, "Hold on, 'twaren't the Indians, it's the white folks this time. Colonel says the rebels is broke loose."

Charity sniffed: "Who air they?"

"Jist what I ask him," McDermott told her, "but all he said was they was a pack o' rascals defyin' King George."

"Why," said Charity, "King George is acrost the ocean. Heered my pappy say so! Then they must be afightin' acrost the ocean!"

"No," objected her husband, "Colonel talked like it was somewheres on this side of the ocean." He smoked quietly, recollecting that the Colonel had also damned some congress or other and it came to him vaguely that in the fall before he had heard some mention of a congress while he was in the Virginia country; and he said: "Might be they're afightin' beyond the Alleghanies."

"Sho'," thus Charity dismissed the matter, "there's always fightin' somewheres."

"That's so," agreed Angus.

But this warfare was not so easily disposed of. There was a tension about the stockade and McDermott did not fail to notice it. Theretofore the few soldiers of the garrison had gone stolidly about their routine, but now they gathered in knots in the tavern and on the muddy roads, excited by rumors of war in which they might have a share. Every few days a messenger would appear, then news and misinformation quickly spread.

And McDermott heard that a general named Gage had driven the rebels from a hill near Boston which, he knew, was a city by the sea.

It was not long after this, and while he was still wondering who these rebels could be, that Colonel Elliott said to him one morning: "McDermott, how long will it take you before you're ready to strike the northeast trail in the Ohio country?"

At last his job was calling him again. He said slowly: " 'Twon't take long; I kin set out 'most any time." Uneasily, he wondered what Charity would say, and he asked: "How fur is it you want me to go?"

Colonel Elliott regarded him speculatively. "First—to Sandusky then farther south." His officer paused, then continued: "I'll have your instructions ready when you get back—an hour, say?"

McDermott nodded and went out. It wouldn't take an hour for him to be ready for the trail. That could be done in ten minutes. But the extra time would be necessary if he were not to part from Charity abruptly.

He found her busy about the cabin and he said from the doorway: "Well, I'll be gone for a spell now."

She looked at him and he saw her arms drop heavily at her sides. "Traipsein' around amongst the Indians, I expect?"

Her voice was dull and there was hopelessness in her dark eyes. Hurriedly he stepped forward and took her in his arms: "Now you'll be in no harm an' the time'll pass right quick. Why I won't be, won't be longer'n a month, I reckon."

She smiled waveringly. "Well, I knowed it when I married you. But a month's a heap of time, Angus."

Already he was getting his things together. "Pass like lightnin' for you," he told her cheerfully.

She was silent for a while. Then she asked: "Where you goin'?"

He told her. "Down along the south shore of Lake Erie an' then fu'ther south." He stood up, having put his salt, powder, shot and meal in his knapsack.

She grasped his shoulders. "You'll take caution!"

He laughed. "Hain't nothing to befall me."

But she insisted: "Promise you'll take caution!"

He picked her up and held her in his lap. "Why I'll be back afore you know it! Hain't nothing 'twixt here an' Gehenna that could keep me away from you!"

She looked up at him. "I won't pester you, nohow. Ain't fitten for wives to pester their menfolk."

He smiled. "If you was a mite littler I could tote you inside my shirt."

Her eyes blinked and she hastily got up and was all bustle: "You sure you ain't forgot anything now?"

He answered by patting his knapsack.

"Got the salt?"

"Got the salt."

"Got the meal?"

"Got the meal."

"Law!" she exclaimed in mock disgust, "you don't need a woman nohow!"

"But I reckon I'll allus need you." He kissed her for the last time.

She stood at the threshold, watching long after he had disappeared behind the cabins on the other side of the stockade.

IX

IT was late spring when Angus McDermott left the garrisoned trading-post at Detroit on his journey among the Indians in the Ohio country. His instructions from Colonel Elliott were simple and of a kind that he could carry out. He was to follow the south shore of Lake Erie into the territory of the Wyandots, to go southward from there toward the Ohio River where the Shawanese had been driven, then to return over a northwest trail into the grounds of the Miamis and Delawares. To the warriors and sachems of these tribes he was to bring the word of Colonel Elliott asking for a council to be held in Detroit at which would be represented all of the Indians who now dwelt in that region. This word was to be accompanied by formal presents from the British Indian agent; and in case the tribes agreed to the council there was to be the promise that more substantial gifts would be forthcoming.

In these promises he saw nothing unusual. For years the government of Pennsylvania had restricted its people from settling in the Indian country and for years there had been peace on that border; and as for Virginia he knew its frontier was not to extend beyond the Ohio River. And thus the word he was carrying was no more to him than reassurance that the Indians would continue to live in their own lands unmolested.

The purpose of this council, all that McDermott knew of it at least, was for the promotion of friendship between the Indians and the white men about

Detroit; the Indians were also to be told that this stretch of forest south of Lake Erie and north and west of the Ohio, the land then owned by England, was to remain for all time as the hunting-grounds of the Miamis, Shawanese, Wyandots and Delawares and that the settlers, who were already making clearings in the fastnesses of the Kentucky forests, were not to cross the river.

Carrying his pack in which were contained the presents for the Indians and his supply of provisions McDermott reached the Wyandot's council-fire near Sandusky on the fifth day after he had left Detroit. This flame was kept alive by the Wolf family of the tribe and burned not far from the lake on a knoll which was surrounded by the Wolf village whose members, considered as the oldest among the eight families that composed the Wyandots, were charged with guarding the sacred fire.

Following southward along the mossy bank of a small creek which emptied into the lake, McDermott came upon the village in the early afternoon. The braves were lolling in the sun before the bark cabins between the water's edge and the corn-fields; fat squaws pounded meal in brightly colored wooden bowls held between their knees, and noisy children clambered about, trying to scale their mothers' backs, crawling perilously near to the river and being slapped resoundingly when they annoyed the braves. There was the smell of dried skins and cooked venison; and by the smoldering village fire a lean dog sniffed inquisitively at a heap of bloody turkey feathers.

The Wyandots were a scattered tribe and that evening runners were sent out by Tarhe the Crane, their sachem, to the various families, which were the bears,

the beavers, the turtles, the deers, the snipes, the herons and the hawks, all of whose villages lay within a day's journey of the council-fire. McDermott waited in Tarhe's cabin, thinking of Charity alone in Detroit and of his long march to the south among the Shawanese where he would see Cornstalk, Blue Jacket, Blackhoof and the rest.

Returning on the following morning the runners brought the word that the sachem of each of the families would arrive for the council on the first night of the full moon. Until then the days went by in a slow, uneventful fashion. McDermott hunted with the braves or sat talking of times gone by before the village fire. Now and again the braves worked at making nets for fishing and belts and straps from filaments of tough bark and the squaws took care of the corn, the beans, the squashes and tobacco on which they would subsist throughout the fall and winter. Though from the same stock as their powerful neighbors, the Seneca-Iroquois northeast of them, the Wyandots' development was not comparable to that of those confederated tribes. The Seneca-Iroquois, whom McDermott had known, were five tribes which worked toward a strong, harmonious government for their people, but the Wyandots struggled by themselves without allies. And where the Seneca families were socialized in the longhouse, the Wyandots strayed to whichever points in their country afforded the easiest hunting. Like the Delawares, Miamis and Shawanese (the Shawanese being the greatest rovers of them all) they had no sense of increasing the value of any portion of land, but left it when provisions grew scarce.

The night of the full moon came and in the morning McDermott awoke to find Tarhe amicably regard-

ing him. "McDermott sleeps well. He is not anxious to know what the sachems have decided?"

McDermott sat up and rubbed his eyes. "Wise sachems could only decide to go!"

Tarhe appeared pleased: "Yes, wise sachems have decided to go."

That afternoon McDermott set out for the Shawanese country which was the land to the south where the Wyandots had permitted them to settle when they had been driven across the banks of the Ohio. Attended by the good wishes of Tarhe and the braves and with his pack filled with provisions, he took the trail that wound southeasterly between the Muskingum and the Scioto.

It was a journey of several days, but the weather was mild and there was a fine sunlight that began with the early dawn and lasted until the dusky haze of evening. At peace with the world, he felt a quiet joy as he tramped through the forest. His visit with the Wyandots had been successful, there was no reason to believe that the gifts of fortune would be smaller among the Shawanese, Delawares and Miamis; and back in Detroit Charity was waiting. As for further talk of the rebels in the colonies he had heard none since the day the messenger had come from the east to Colonel Elliott.

He reached the principal Shawanese village in a summer downpour. It was on the east bank of the Scioto and he had been directed there by a stray band of Indians whom he had encountered on the fourth day after leaving the Wyandots. Up to that time the weather had been clear, the atmosphere fairly glowing with sunlight, but as he came to the Scioto and walked along its banks the skies unexpectedly grew

black and drops of water came through the windless forest in steady streams. Plop, plop, he could hear the liquid crystals thumping tumultuously on the broad green leaves and on the dimpled surface of the river. Up ahead lay the camp and as he drew nearer he could see the charred logs which the rain had extinguished; the inhabitants had all got under shelter of their tents.

Coming to the first tent he stooped before the flap and called inside. A number of voices answered and he lifted the skin which served as a door. At his appearance a fat-faced child screamed and dived toward its mother's lap. The squaws huddled together in alarm and the eyes of several braves stared at him sternly. He spoke out at once: "Friends, is this the village of Chief Cornstalk?"

For a moment nobody answered; then the sullen voice of a brave replied: "Ai, Chief Cornstalk!"

At that he stepped inside and seated himself unconcernedly among them. "McDermott, the messenger from the white captain beyond the lake speaks to you," he began; "he has journeyed far to talk with the celebrated chieftain of the Shawanese."

For a while, the Indians talked together, watching McDermott narrowly. They were in no friendly mood toward white men, that was obvious. But at last a slender youth stood up and said to McDermott: "Come, we go to Chief Cornstalk."

The two of them ran down the village through the rain and stopped before a tent at the farther end. "Chief Cornstalk! Chief Cornstalk!" called the youth, waiting.

A sonorous voice replied: "Enter, my child."

McDermott followed the youth into the tent and

stood before Chief Cornstalk. A man of medium height, but slender and wiry, with deep-set eyes and a broader, calmer brow than any Indian's that McDermott had ever seen, this sachem surveyed him. "Who is this man?" he quietly asked the youth.

But McDermott spoke up for himself: "I come, O Chief, from the white captain beyond the lake as a messenger from him who would treat with you."

Chief Cornstalk gazed at McDermott moodily: "When the white man treats with the dark man it is to the dark man's destruction."

"There have been unhappy days for the Indian," responded McDermott frankly, "but now the white captain holds out his hand in friendship. Would it not be wise to accept the hand of the white captain?" His own eyes met Cornstalk's squarely.

The chief moved his shoulders wearily: "Cornstalk seeks neither quarrels nor favors at the hands of the white man. He is content for his people to live in peace until the last sun sets above him."

McDermott continued persuasively: "Chief Cornstalk speaks wisely, but it is the word of peace that the white captain would say to him! Let the chief be assured that his tired tribe may rest at last: the white captain will give his word that the Ohio country is to remain Indian country, equally to be shared by the Shawanese, the Wyandots, the Miamis and the Delawares! The white captain would speak of the Shawanese as his children."

Not without sarcasm, Chief Cornstalk inquired: "What does the white captain ask of his children whose skin is of a different color from his own?"

McDermott's reply stated the object of his journey: "The white captain asks that the warriors and sa-

chems empowered to speak for the Shawanese meet with the white captain in the town beyond the lake and light the pipe of peace."

Cornstalk turned away a little. "You may remain; Cornstalk will consider your words which you bring from the white captain."

McDermott nodded his agreement and unslung his pack. Inside the tent the air was so close as to be nearly stifling; on the bark and skins which covered the poles the rain continued beating a quick tattoo. But, knowing better than to try to force a decision, or to appear ill at ease before an Indian chieftain trained in stoicism, he sat down on his blanket and waited for the downpour to end.

Later the two men conversed again, but said nothing more about whether a council would be called for the purpose of sending Shawanese as representatives to Detroit. McDermott joined Cornstalk in the evening meal which was cooked over a fire inside the tent and attended by his family, his brother Red Hawk, his son Ellimpsico and the squaws all squatting about in the smoky haze which carried the odor of cooking venison and beans.

There was talk that night about Blue Jacket, a rising Shawanese warrior, who had led a party of braves on a hunt toward the north bank of the Ohio the day before. And Red Hawk said: "Blue Jacket has too much courage and not sufficient sense. He would meet a bear and before turning on his heel would suffer his entrails to be torn out." Red Hawk looked moodily about the semi-darkness of the tent. McDermott inferred that Blue Jacket had been expected to arrive and that the people were anxious because he had not come.

"He leads our warriors," put in young Ellimpsico. "I too would follow Blue Jacket."

His father frowned, "Cornstalk's son will keep the peace; he will not follow Blue Jacket."

Young Ellimpsico squirmed uncomfortably and was silent.

McDermott also was silent, wondering what Blue Jacket's wanderings had to do with the keeping of the peace. The whole camp, it seemed from what the people said, were uneasy over Blue Jacket's absence.

McDermott discovered the reason on the following night when Blue Jacket returned. Bright weather had come again after the day of rain and McDermott was beside the camp-fire talking to Red Hawk when there was a noise in the underbrush and Blue Jacket and his warriors appeared from the trail into the centre of the village. Their shoulders were laden with quartered deer and long poles on which they carried the raccoon, but it was not of the game that they were thinking. Ordering the meat to be thrown down as the warriors reached the village, Blue Jacket placed himself at the head of the hunting-party and declaimed to the braves and squaws who arose to welcome them:

"Brothers, for the second time Blue Jacket has journeyed to the banks of the Ohio and for the second time he has seen the white man on its water and making for our shores! How many moons will come, O brothers, before the white man comes again among us to drive us off with his long knife! Must the bones of our ancestors leap from their graves before we are heated enough to strike their murderers! Blue Jacket is no squaw! He has long legs and a warrior's arm! Who will follow Blue Jacket?"

But before any one could answer the fiery speech

Chief Cornstalk stepped from his tent and walked forward with solemn dignity, not stopping until he faced Blue Jacket. Then he began: "My children! Who will deny the bravery of Blue Jacket? Who would fear to put on the war-paint and follow him to battle? Not one! Time and again Blue Jacket has proved his valor in leading our young men; there is no question of that. My children! When battle calls Blue Jacket may well lead you, but now is no time for fighting! Many of our great men we have lost to the Long Knives and the Bright Coats when we were forced to come into this country after defeat. Now we are living in peace again and the Long Knives are across the river. Let us keep our tempers! Let us not provoke all of the Long Knives merely to punish one who comes into our country. Let us bide our time and strength and fight only for our homes. Your chieftain has spoken."

They heard him without interruption. And as his last words were uttered there were cries of: "Ai! Ai! Chief Cornstalk is also brave, but his head is wise and his heart has goodness!"

"Ai, who can doubt Chief Cornstalk!"

As for the squaws they did not speak, being busy among the strings of coon and quartered deer which lay in a heap beside Blue Jacket.

Blue Jacket himself crossed his arms and nodded slowly, gracefully accepting defeat: "Chief Cornstalk speaks that the time has not come; Blue Jacket admits it."

McDermott, whose presence had not been noticed by the warrior, now arose and confronted both men. He spoke quickly and vehemently, hoping to gain the object of his journey while the question of war and the

question of peace remained before the villagers. At a nod from Chief Cornstalk he began: "The white captain beyond the lake which is many long sleeps from here has sent his messenger among the Shawanese to ask for peace and to promise protection! The white captain is good and would embrace all of the dark-skinned men in the Ohio country as his children! This is your country, the white captain says; may it so remain so long as the water flows and the trees put on new greenery! The white captain has presents for your sachems and warriors and holds them in the great town beyond the lake where he waits for you to come for them and sit with him in council!"

McDermott met the eyes of Blue Jacket who asked sternly: "Who is this white man who speaks the tongue of the Shawanese?"

McDermott answered: "The white man is a friend; he speaks for the white captain beyond the lake."

Blue Jacket looked at Chief Cornstalk, asking impatiently: "Is it the truth the white man speaks? Then why do we not go? Why do we stand here when the hand of friendship is held out to us and the brand is lifted to the pipe of peace?"

Chief Cornstalk answered: "The town of the white captain beyond the lake is many nights from here. What have we to do with a town so far away? Let Blue Jacket journey there, but not in the name of his people."

They all looked at McDermott, but he merely observed: "The white messenger has spoken."

From this McDermott understood that even though Chief Cornstalk called a council his own word would be against sending envoys to Detroit, but that Blue Jacket, in the name of the warriors, might undertake

the trip himself. Thus far his mission had not been unsuccessful; Tarhe had given a cordial promise and Blue Jacket, he believed, would go. Leaving the Shawanese on the following day and travelling northwest where lay the country of the Miamis and Delawares, McDermott found the Miamis as agreeable as the Wyandots. Entering their council village of Kekinoggay and explaining the purpose of his visit to the chief sachem he saw the old chief's face show a deep satisfaction.

"The word of the white captain is very good; it delights the ears of his children even when spoken from so great a distance! In very truth it is several sleeps from Kekinoggay to the white captain's town beyond the lake, but the Miami chieftains would go farther, even farther, to hear the words of wisdom of the white captain."

They were all standing in the middle of the village and as the old chief finished speaking the men about him nodded weightily: "Ai!"

One of them asked solicitously: "The white captain's messenger may be hungry? Will he eat with us at our fire?"

McDermott took up his musket and went with them to the pots beside the village fire which several squaws were tending. The braves were friendly throughout the meal and the old chief invited him to remain with them a day or so longer until the main body of the braves returned from their hunting-expedition to the south. He promised a feast if McDermott would stay and mentioned the name of Meekannequah, the Little Turtle, whom McDermott had met at the Grand Glaize the year before when he had been sent to the trading-post at the Maumee and the Glaize rivers to discover why the Indians refused to trade their furs

to the white men, Spence and the others. And though he would have liked to see Little Turtle again there were yet the Delawares to be interviewed and McDermott was anxious to complete his mission and return to Detroit. Early the next morning, with the assurance that the Miamis would be represented at the council-house, McDermott left the Miami country for the east.

The Delawares were at that time scattered between the Miami country and the Wyandots' and beyond the Wyandots' province eastward, some of them living in the Moravian mission far down the Muskingum. And McDermott, hoping to find them as agreeable as the Miamis, travelled along the Maumee toward the east, reaching the point opposite the Grand Glaize on the second night. From where he made his camp he could see the trading-post where Spence and the other two white trappers lived, but he did not cross over to see whether they were there or not. Instead he spread his blanket on a knoll above the Indian fields and villages and in the morning proceeded on into the forest.

Beyond the Maumee the forest was exceptionally dense and full of marshes, abundant with mosquitoes which hummed about him so continuously and irritatingly that he seldom stopped without making a fire. The trail was poorly marked and where it did not lead through swamps was overgrown with vines and brambles; he was glad at last to stand near the source of the Muskingum and to know that the next night would be spent among the Delawares.

Half a mile from the Delaware village he overtook a lone hunter returning with a brace of turkeys. McDermott called and the Indian turned abruptly, then stopped and watched him with suspicious eyes.

"You Delaware?" McDermott asked.

"Ai, Delaware," the Indian answered slowly.

McDermott came up with him. He observed genially: "Two fine pullaook you have shot. You go back to Delaware town?"

The Indian nodded, pushing his black straggly hair from his face with his free hand. "Delaware town close by."

"Hopocan still chief of Delawares?" McDermott asked as they walked ahead, the messenger in front so as to show that he had no ill intentions.

"Ai, Captain Pipe and White Eyes both."

They walked for some distance without speaking. Then McDermott asked: "Are Hopocan and White Eyes in their village?"

"Ai." The Indian was not very talkative.

They wound down along the trail and McDermott saw the Delaware village lying in the bottom-lands of the upper Muskingum among the fields of yellowing corn. There were a dozen or more conical tents and a drift of smoke rising from the midst of them, and as they drew nearer the Indian offered, to McDermott's surprise: "You speak with Captain Pipe? I show you his cabin."

Now the Indian took the lead and guided McDermott over the beaten path that twisted below to the cabins. They passed three groups of gaping Delawares and stopped at last before a cabin that was taller than the rest, and decorated with crude figures painted in red and yellows. Bending toward the flap, the Indian called: "Hopocan; a white man speaks your name."

In a moment there came out of the tent a deeply bronzed man with a face unusually narrow and lips unusually thin for an Indian's. He wore the vari-colored wampum belt that was his sign of office, and his

hunting-shirt was open at the throat, showing the rippling muscles of his chest. This was Chief Hopocan, or, in English, Captain Pipe. His voice was deep and there was sternness in it as he asked: "Who seeks Captain Pipe?"

McDermott met his eyes. "The voice of the white captain beyond the lake speaks to Captain Pipe; will he listen?"

Captain Pipe inclined his head. "What is the white captain's word?" He had become less surly since McDermott's mention of Colonel Elliott.

"The white captain," replied McDermott, "asks that sachems and warriors of the Delawares be chosen to represent their tribe in the council-house at the town beyond the lake. The white captain extends his hand in peace; it is his wish that he and his children live in friendship forever."

Captain Pipe heard him without interruption. When McDermott had finished speaking he answered: "Captain Pipe has always lived in friendship with the white captain. It is Chief White Eyes who should be asked to give allegiance. Captain Pipe will go, but who can answer for White Eyes?"

"Let Chief White Eyes answer for Chief White Eyes," suggested McDermott.

"He will be called," the other promised. "Come inside."

But Chief White Eyes was slow in arriving. And McDermott could not help but feel that there was hostility between these two men who governed the fate of the Delawares. Captain Pipe had spoken White Eyes' name with his thin lips twisted grimly; now he sat in a mood of angry brooding.

Evening came, but White Eyes did not appear. Re-

maining in the tent, McDermott heard a young brave call through the opening in a pleasurably excited tone: "The play begins; will Captain Pipe watch his young men's skill at little bones?"

"Ai!" said Captain Pipe and motioned to McDermott. They joined the squaws and braves trooping through the dusk into the centre of the village, where a great many had previously gathered near the leaping fire. Going nearer, the chief and McDermott looked through the crowd that encircled two braves who knelt and faced each other. There was a wooden bowl between them.

Eagerly the spectators looked down at the sober-faced brave who, with his left hand toward the fire, took up the flat-bottomed bowl. In it there were six small bones, each about the size of a woman's fingernail, smooth and flat on two sides, one of which had been painted black, and the other side a creamy white. The brave raised the bowl, twirled it dexterously and thumped it suddenly on the ground. The little bones danced, leaped upward and fell back in the bottom of the bowl.

"Ai," commented an elderly warrior as the bones lay motionless, "four blacks. It is not hard to beat. Throw, Big Feet."

Big Feet took up the bowl. He shook his arm as if to make his elbow limber; he lowered his head and breathed prayerfully upon the six little bones. "How!" he ejaculated, "come up all white, you pretty little bones," and spinning the vessel he dropped it smartly on the ground. Flames from the fire rising into the evening dusk showed five little bones with their black sides uppermost.

"Ai! ai! hai!" Interest was warming.

"Beat that, Dog Standing by the Fire, and delight the spirit of your grandfathers," counselled an onlooker, leaning eagerly forward.

Brother Dog Standing by the Fire, his dark eyes snapping in the twilight, took up the bowl and, kneeling tensely, rattled the little bones against the sides. "Talk, my children," he addressed them, "tell Big Feet's grandfathers to hide their eyes with shame!" his arm swept out and his hand released the spinning bowl.

"A five! a five!" pleaded his adherents.

"No five! a three! a three!" shouted Big Feet's friends.

The bowl lay still and the bones tumbled: five white sides lay upward.

Big Feet reached quickly for the bowl. Now he had the four of the original throw to beat, and his count of five had accomplished nothing unless he could duplicate it immediately. A five was what he wanted; with it he would quickly win the game that would otherwise wear on till one or the other of the contestants had made forty points. While his friends and enemies were dancing and shouting, he raised himself on one knee, and with the bowl gripped shrewdly he began to sway from side to side, the onlookers moving with him, imitating his gestures as closely as if they too were about to cast the bones.

"Guide my hand, O spirit of my grandfathers!—" the vessel spun, bounced abruptly on the ground and the bones rattled to a standstill—"open your eyes to see your grandson triumph," so sang Big Feet.

But when the six little cubes had made their final flop it was seen that their upward sides were equally divided between the white and the black.

There was a moan from those who favored Big Feet and a shout of glee from the others. They howled, worked their bodies into strange contortions, and called on their favorite spirits.

McDermott squatted on the edge of the circle, watching intently. The contestants played on, evenly at first. But later Dog Standing by the Fire forged ahead toward the forty points which would win for him the game. At each throw of the bones the shouts of the crowd grew louder.

It was into this scene that Chief White Eyes finally appeared. He stood beside Captain Pipe, but did not look at him. McDermott saw his full lips outthrust in his broad, impassive face, and knew that he had come unwillingly. After a while White Eyes said briefly to Captain Pipe: "You have called me!"

"Yes," said Captain Pipe, and led the way back to his tent.

It was McDermott who began. He stated the object of his journey, and spoke of Colonel Elliott's desire that the Indians, should continue to inhabit the Indian country unmolested. Concluding, he glanced at White Eyes questioningly.

White Eyes stared at McDermott. He said flatly: "The Delawares give no favors and ask none! The Delawares are not the white captain's children; their only father is the Great Spirit!"

Leaning forward, Captain Pipe tried to influence him: "The white captain gives presents in the council-house, Brother White Eyes; why should we not go there to repeat our vows of friendship and receive our share?"

Chief White Eyes pushed out his thick lips stubbornly. "White Eyes has spoken!" He looked scorn-

fully at Captain Pipe: "Hopocan may seek the favor of the white captain beyond the lake; White Eyes will remain with his people." It was his last word. Bending over, he left the tent, and they heard his firm step stalking off down the path.

Disappointed, McDermott turned to Captain Pipe, hoping not to lose completely even though the tribe was divided: "But you will come?"

Captain Pipe hesitated. At length he nodded. "Hopocan will come."

There was no more to be gained from the Delawares, McDermott knew. Early the next morning he began his march back to Detroit. He had been absent a long while; the leaves on the maples were turning from green to copper, gold and crimson, and the berries in the underbrush were ripe. The creeks and rivers which had been high on the green banks when he started out were now low in their beds and easily forded. Three days from the Delaware country he reached the southwest shore of Lake Erie, and on the afternoon of the fifth day he saw the folds of the bright flag ruffling gently from the tall pole above the garrison at Detroit. He passed the sentry, who welcomed him at the gate, and walked toward Colonel Elliott's chambers. There were, he noticed, more soldiers in the fort than there had been, and more men in the hall that led to the Colonel's room. But he glanced at them only casually, being anxious to make his report and get to his own cabin.

Colonel Elliott, his face ruddy and his scarlet jacket unbuttoned as ever, greeted him as he stood in the doorway. "McDermott! Come in, man; come in! Let's feel of your hand; I'll swear I can't tell whether you're real or not."

McDermott unslung his pack and propped his musket against the Colonel's table. They shook hands and Colonel Elliott asked: "Have as good luck with all of the Indians as you had with the Wyandots? My congratulations if you had!"

"They been here, have they?"

"Yes, yes, nearly three weeks ago, and went away contented."

McDermott nodded. "They behaved right favor'ble. The Miamis were friendly-like too; but I couldn't get no word from the Shawanese. Cornstalk says he's pleased to be let alone, but I think Blue Jacket'll come along."

"Good," said Colonel Elliott, "from all I've heard of Blue Jacket, he's a proper man to be on agreeable terms with. Now what about the Delawares?"

"Well," McDermott told him, "Hopocan, the one we call Captain Pipe, he give his word, but White Eyes was right cantankerous. Said he never heard of his havin' no white father, and he reckoned he could look after himself without outside help."

Colonel Elliott was silent and thoughtful a moment. Then he said: "Well done, McDermott. I could have wished for more success with the Delawares, but then White Eyes may change his tune before long."

"Mebbe so," agreed McDermott doubtfully.

Leaving Colonel Elliott he walked swiftly across the stockade to his cabin, from the chimney of which came the comforting sight of a thin curl of smoke twisting upward. As he opened the door he saw Charity sitting motionless before the table, and her shoulders were slumped forward in an attitude as though she was waiting for something which she had despaired of ever

taking place. At the sound of his step her eyes were filled with a child-like fear.

"Angus!" she cried, and joyfully smiled down her troubles.

He kissed her exuberantly: "Law, it's a comfort to find you here!"

"You've been so long," she said with a kind of mournful crooning; "I've been that worried, Angus!"

He took her on his lap and sat on the stool by the hearth. "Well," he said practically, "I'm here now."

"Yes," she said, and sighed contentedly. After a while she added: "But I reckon you'll have to stop your traipsein' for a spell."

He gazed down at her questioningly.

"Decent folks," she explained with mock asperity, "stay close to home when their wives air about to have a baby."

Befuddled by this information he could only say: "Well. . . . Well now! *Is* that a fact!"

Little George McDermott was born late that winter.

X

CHARITY was smiling peacefully. She sat on a stool before the fireside and held little George on her knees. Angus was home again after a long journey among the Moravian Indians, and the hearth glowed brighter than it had burned for months. She looked down at him leaning against the wall with skin-clad legs outstretched and his pipe in both hands. "Ain't he a bouncer!" she exclaimed, holding up her son's small, pink heels.

Angus inspected him gravely. "Don't look like he used to," he said gravely. "If they ever was anything redder and punier than him when he was born!"

"Sho'!" Charity scolded softly, "all chillen look thataway at first."

He shook his head slowly, as if in the presence of a miracle. "Didn't never think he'd grow to be a mortal, an' that's the truth." He paused, drew his knees beneath his chin, and exhaled a voluminous cloud of smoke. "Makes me recollect; I seen one down in Salem. In the lap of a Delaware squaw, it was. Couldn't of been more'n a few weeks old, but I vow he looked like a grampappy. Wrinkles all over his face."

Little George squalled and frantically waved two bare legs as his mother covered him in his blanket. "How them squaws," she began with a frown of disapproval, "keep their chillen alive and treat 'em like they do must puzzle Prividence itself."

McDermott laughed. "You hain't never seen 'em. Why, them Indians in that settlement got cabins that

keep 'em warmer'n buffalo-hide, an' provender to feed 'em year in an' year out."

"If that ain't a man every time! Cabins and vittles won't make the varmints clean."

"No," he agreed, then continued soberly, "but I'm feared they'll do a deal worse."

"Who?"

"Cabins an' vittles. Them Delawares won't budge for their lives."

Charity put her son in the cradle. "What for? Air they bound to budge?"

He explained: "They don't set jist right: on the aidge of the Ohio country and lookin' smack in the face of the rebels! Heerd say they's been times when Pipe's Delawares struck at the Pennsylvany folks from the Moravian towns, an' then come back with provender they took from the settlers! The colonel wants 'em to budge, the rebels all want 'em to budge, but they won't nohow."

"If they're that ornery," said Charity, "I wouldn't traffic with 'em."

"Hain't easy like you say," objected her husband. If only his part were as simple as that, he thought soberly. But it wasn't. Colonel Elliott had sent him and Half King, a Wyandot chieftain, to harangue the Chistianized Delawares into returning with them to Detroit, but they had refused. His connection with the unsuccessful mission gave him a sense of responsibility toward them. Thinking of the Delawares in those Moravian towns on the Muskingum caused him to lie awake long after he and Charity had gone to their bed.

It was then late fall and the cold was growing

sharper. Presently winter shut down on that stockaded outpost, hemming it in with deepening snows. In the vast quiet of whitened fields, stripped forests and rivers thick with ice, Indians and trappers slowly came and went about their business as they had always done—as if no war was known. And as time passed McDermott's principal absorption came from the simple fact that he was living in a house, was entering into a civilized existence that was strange because he had known so little of it.

One February morning when he was splitting up some of the pile of logs that lay at the east end of the cabin he heard Charity call: "Angus!" Her voice was low and imperative. He dropped his axe at once.

"Well!" he said as he stood on the threshold, staring amazedly. Little George had lifted himself up with the aid of a stool and was standing unsupported, half way between the stool and the table leg, waving his plump fists and rather crowing over the accomplishment.

"Now ain't that—" began Charity, her head tilted eagerly.

"Why!" ejaculated Angus, "if he hain't a'most a man!" He held out a long arm coaxingly. And though little George took that moment to plop suddenly on the floor and stare up, round-eyed and tearful, at his parents, McDermott was not to be shaken from his belief that soon his son would be grown.

"Be talkin' in no time now," he said to Charity that night; and added, "reckon I'd best make him a stool to draw up to the table for his meals same as you and me."

From that day his interest in his son became profound, strong enough to withstand the year and a half of listening to weird, unintelligible gurgles and per-

emptory shouts before the child's first word was clearly spoken.

Those years that passed while little George grew into boyhood were peaceful so far as they affected the McDermott family. Blue Jacket and Captain Pipe came to the council-house in Detroit; both made promises of loyalty before they returned to their tribes. As for the Miamis and Wyandots they were to journey to the foot of the Maumee rapids each spring and there receive presents of good-will from the British commandant. And from all of this McDermott began to believe that the days of warfare in the Ohio country were ended, and that the Indians would continue to inhabit their land in peace. True, the Senecas had declared themselves against the rebels; the Delawares nad divided and half of them had joined the Senecas; but that had little bearing on the Ohio Indians. he thought.

Often he looked forward to what he believed to be the future of that country. He saw the Indians living peaceably among themselves in that rich forest, saw the settlers restricted to making clearings south of the Ohio River and north of Lake Erie. Ever since Lord Dunmore had driven the Shawanese westward McDermott had considered it only right that the Ohio country should belong to the tribes that inhabited it, and he was pleased to know that the settlers who came to Detroit were breaking the land north of the lake rather than to the south. For it seemed to guarantee that the Wyandots and Delawares, Miamis and Shawanese would remain unmolested.

Perplexing talk of the rebels still came to McDermott's ears; and he thought vaguely of the uprising of these men in the distant colonies, but only with won-

der that they should not have been quelled long before. He heard no understandable reason why they were fighting; no description which would inform him just who these rebels were. But there must be many of them, more than anybody in Detroit had believed, according to talk which he heard in the tavern. One night—it was during the fourth winter little George had seen—McDermott came home to tell Charity:

"They're ascratchin' fur soldiers up thisaway, I hear'n tell."

Charity took up the iron stew-pot which had been boiling over the hearth fire. "They been adoin' that for 'most two year now, ain't they?"

"That's it!" said Angus. "Allus afore they got what they asked for. But now they hain't no more. I reckon old King George is findin' it a right smart tussle with them rebels." He sat down at the table.

"Eat your vittles while they're hot," advised Charity. Going to the door she called: "Come, Georgie!"

George's stubby legs rounded the cabin on the run. There was a stick in his hand and as he flung through the door he waved it, shouting: "Boo! I'm a rebel! Boo!"

McDermott continued calmly: "Hear tell at the tavern how they hain't no more soldiers to come acrost the ocean."

"Might be they all been killed off," hazarded Charity. She was not much interested in the tavern gossip.

"No," McDermott dipped the wooden spoon into the stew-pot, filling George's dish. "They got folks on their backs, Spanish an' sich-like foreigners, King George's men's got them to fight, an' cain't be spared to grapple with the rebels. I heered it."

Charity heard him vaguely. "George, don't gobble

so. You act worse'n your father." She smiled at Angus. "What you been asayin'?"

McDermott patiently repeated: "I been atalkin' about King George. They say he cain't spare no more soldiers to fight the rebels."

"That ain't our trouble," answered Charity. "Seems like them folks acrost the ocean are allus in a brawl."

"Reckon they been raised right up to it. I've heered say how acrost the water they make folks fight whether or no. They say to a man, 'Go for a soldier,' and he goes for a soldier whether he's a mind to or not." He looked with grave earnestness at Charity. "Now that hain't right, I'll be hanged if it is."

Charity inspected him suspiciously. "Seems like you're talkin' a deal. Jist like pappy when he'd come home from asettin' in Morgan's tavern."

"Sho'," said McDermott, "you take on like you thought I'd been drinkin' spirits. Had no more'n a gill or two of rum." He frowned thoughtfully, puzzled by the glimpse of the vast outside world which he had got at the tavern.

Through repeated trips into the Ohio country McDermott was familiar with the movements and the spirit of the Indians, but of what went on in the civilized world he knew very little. Runners from Montreal brought what news of the world there was to be had in Detroit, and many of those reports were known only by the commandant, to whom they were addressed. Soldiers, traders, and trappers were always to be heard talking in the tavern, but the intelligence they discussed was usually weeks old and badly distorted by repetition. But he knew for a certainty that the Delawares on the Muskingum, who had been Christianized by the Moravian missionaries with whom he had visited on his first journey to Detroit, were in a dangerous

place. For the people east of the Ohio and west of the Alleghanies claimed that these meek Indians in their villages of Salem, Schœnbrunn and Gnadenhutten harbored their more war-like brothers who despoiled the white settlements in Pennsylvania. And going among them again that next summer on his way back from the Shawanese, he tried once more to bring them to Detroit, where Colonel Elliott had promised they would be cared for. But they were obdurate as before.

Winter came. One December morning McDermott was in Colonel Elliott's chamber when a messenger arrived with a sealed letter from the governor-general. He saw the colonel read the letter, calmly at first, then with his face flushed and furrowed, and heard him mutter angrily:

"Cornwallis, eh! Well, damn my soul if the rebels ain't done it!"

McDermott waited, smoking his pipe and staring out the window at the first snowfall of the season.

"Well!" said Colonel Elliott abruptly, "that takes the stopper clean out of the bottle! Rat me, but who'd have thought it!" He looked toward McDermott as if expecting him to deny the truth of what he had just read.

McDermott eyed him uneasily, wondering why the name of Cornwallis should make the colonel's face nearly as red as his bright jacket. "They been a killin' somewheres?" he ventured.

But Colonel Elliott had got back his self-possession. Leaning over his table and reaching for his quill pen, he asked calmly: "What's that? A killing? Oh, no; the crown has lost the colonies, that's all," and McDermott saw a corner of his mouth twist up with a bitter quirk in his half-averted face.

Later that day McDermott heard him say: "I expect

tney'll next be having a go at the Ohio country. By God, I expect they will!"

That was an apprehension that McDermott could understand. The Ohio country was no vague name like Cornwallis, but a great tract of forests and winding rivers which he knew well. But he doubted that any people would attempt to conquer it. "Sho'," he said, "hain't all the Ohio country the Indians'?"

"Of course," Colonel Elliott answered abstractedly.

"Then how'll they take it?"

Colonel Elliott gave no reply and McDermott went on about his work. But he thought often of this vague threat against the Ohio country as the long winter wore on. And once he said to Charity:

"Colonel's afeared the rebels hanker after the Ohio country. Fixin' to take it away from the Indians, he thinks."

"Well?" questioned Charity.

"Be a deal of trouble if they do. I'd hate to see it."

Charity asked: "Why cain't you leave the varmints to themselves? Ain't you done enough of their fetchin' and carryin'?"

He shook his head. "I'm right good friends with all the chiefs. Colonel says I done a deal to keep things smooth an' quiet-like."

"So's they'll trade Detroit folks their furs and skins," interpreted Charity. "That's all he looks out for."

"Oh, no," denied McDermott; "the colonel favors 'em like I do."

But Charity remained sceptical. For a number of reasons she suggested that they leave Detroit and build a cabin in a clearing of their own. She was weary of being alone during his long journeys; neither she nor

George was contented in the British trading-post. Moreover she distrusted the Indians and felt that only sorrow could come to her husband for his work among them. There was money, enough to buy land in North Carolina if they cared to go there, she said, and perhaps Angus would fare better than her father had done. It might be better living in that country now that it no longer belonged to King George. Certainly it would be no worse, for the people of North Carolina, she told him, would put up with no misrule from the rebels, even though they had won and were in control. But to all of this McDermott shook his head.

The winter ended in the loudly swooping winds of March. One blowy morning there was a knock at McDermott's cabin, and Colonel Elliott's orderly stood there.

"Colonel says 'come quick.' They's a ratted Indian in his chamber tryin' to talk, and he can't make out a word."

McDermott put on his cap and set out across the wind-swept fields. The Indian carried the nature of his news in his gloomy face, and McDermott found Colonel Elliott staring at him with an anxiety approaching anger.

"Tell me what this creature has to say, McDermott," he burst out exasperatedly. "All he can mumble is 'bad news! bad news!' I grant him it's bad news, but what the devil is it about?"

McDermott looked at the Wyandot. "What brings you?"

"White brother, I come from the towns where the Delawares bow to the Long Knive's God; I come quickly." His dark face became even more gloomy

and his black eyes were dulled with a film of bewilderment. "White brother, I too bowed to the Long Knive's God, even as the Delawares."

"Yes," said McDermott.

"White brother, the Indians at Salem heard your warning when you came with Chief Half-King, but their hearts were in their well-filled cabins and their land."

"Damn it!" Colonel Elliott leaned forward, "what does he say!"

McDermott moved his lips uneasily: "Reckon he's acomin' to it directly."

"White brother, the priest of the Long Knives' God spoke. 'Have trust in the Maker of all things and you will not be harmed. Take off your evil ways; fight no longer, but live in peace and security with all the people.' Thus spake the priests when the Indians gave word to their alarm of the Long Knives to the east."

McDermott nodded and his eyes felt uncomfortably bulging.

"But now," went on the Wyandot in a heavy monotone, "the Christian Delawares are wanderers and have no roof to shield their heads from the winds and storms. White brother, the Long Knives came to Salem. They came with soft words among our people. Their leader, the white Captain Williamson, said: 'I speak you fair.' They took them by the hand and led them into the long house by the council ground—a great many of our people. Old men, braves, squaws and little children they led into the long house."

His gloomy eyes lay full on McDermott as he continued: "And there their voices grew harder and their faces grew black with the evil spirit. With their knives and tomahawks they began their slaying, until the

blood ran deep and their arms were weary. White brother, not even a child left that long-house alive."

"Sho'!" McDermott breathed, almost stupefied. Then he growled out fiercely: "God 'lmighty, colonel, they butchered a heap of 'em at Gnadenhutten!"

At this clipped interpretation of the Wyandot's tidings Colonel Elliott's face got redder than usual, and he struck his fist on the table with such vehemence that the quill pen fell out of the inkwell. "Who're you talking about, McDermott? Why can't you tell me what the fellow says?"

Staring at him, McDermott answered dully: "Pennsylvany folks, I reckon. Hain't nothing but what we been expectin' all along, only it takes me sudden like, akillin' sich a heap of 'em thataway. Kilt a passel, young fry an' all, so they did, an' burnt down the cabins in the bargain."

Colonel Elliott's cheeks grew sallow and he held his mouth in a querulous manner. When he spoke his voice sounded as though he had tried to whistle and failed: "Wh-where are the rest of 'em?"

McDermott pulled at his lips. Somehow they felt stiff and damaged. From the morose-appearing Wyandot runner standing before him he discovered that the surviving Delawares of Christian faith had fled into the northwest tangle beyond the source of the Muskingum.

Hearing this, Colonel Elliott said: "Well, we'll get hold of them. Settle them somewhere around here, eh?" He stood for a while without speaking, nervously tapping his knuckles on the table. Then he said: "Tell this fellow we'll do whatever can be done. See that he takes some presents when he goes—for himself, I mean, poor devil," and lifting his voice he called to the orderly.

The orderly entered immediately. "Yes, sir."

Colonel Elliott nodded toward the Indian messenger. "Take care of this fellow while he's here."

McDermott and Colonel Elliott were left alone. It was the officer that spoke. "Things worsen all the time, McDermott."

McDermott remained silent.

Colonel Elliott added heavily: "Well, its an ugly shame, but there're others who'll fare worse for the blunder." He sat down abruptly in his straight and high-backed chair and looked with unseeing eyes at the litter of correspondence on the table.

McDermott went heavily about his work, thinking of the Delawares that had been killed. He knew it meant the end of the Moravian settlements, that those who had escaped would go back to their tribe and live in the old, familiar way, content with a shelter made of skins and no provision for the morrow. And he wondered if the Delawares would cross the Ohio into the Pennsylvania country for revenge.

Back in the cabin that night Charity welcomed him anxiously. "Want you to go traipsein' agin, does he?" And her son sat solemnly staring, waiting for him to speak.

"No," said Angus slowly; he added, "they up an' done it."

She looked up quickly: "Who done what?"

"Them Bible Delawares in Salem. Some Pennsylvany folks come up there an' fell to butcherin' right an' left."

"Sho'!" Charity laid her hand on her cheek, wincing. "They did!"

"Kilt a deal of 'em, countin' younguns." McDermott sat down wearily.

Because of the strange tone in which his parents spoke young George lowered his eyes and scuffed at the floor with the toe of his moccasin.

"It's right—" observing a wet streak on his son's half-turned face, McDermott paused.

"He's scairt by all this talk of killin'!" Charity said sympathetically.

"Come on, boy," his father told him, "we'll go ketch a squirrel afore dark." Head down, young George lagged out the door behind him.

But the venture was not successful, for McDermott felt little interest in shooting squirrels. Silently he went and silently he came home. The death of the Delawares worried him. He felt that if he had urged them stronger when he and Half-King had gone to warn them to leave, they might have come with him and thus have been spared.

Later he said to Charity: "I feel right mean about them Indians at Salem."

She comforted him: "Well, it's done with now and there's naught can be done about it."

But it wasn't done with.

That summer another Indian runner came to Detroit with a message to deliver from the intermingled Wyandots and Delawares between Sandusky and the source of the Muskingum. McDermott was in Colonel Elliott's chamber when he arrived; he saw a dark, sober head, a pair of wary eyes, and a silently moving figure in deerskin following the orderly across the threshold toward the table near which he stood talking with Colonel Elliott.

"I seek the white captain," said the Indian, his gaze wavering between the two men.

McDermott answered: "My lips will repeat the words to the white captain."

The Indian spoke: "I carry this word from Chief Hopocan. Many Long Knives have entered the wilderness to fight the Indian. Chief Hopocan asks for help."

Listening sharply, Colonel Elliott asked: "Fight? Did he say they were fighting, McDermott?"

McDermott assented. "Goin' to, it looks like. Folks from over east air acomin' into their country."

Colonel Elliott loudly snapped his fingers with vexation. "What'd he say about Captain Pipe?"

"He wants you should send him some men."

Colonel Elliott was silent.

The Indian continued: "Our young men see the Long Knives come to Mingo Bottom. They come like the turtle. Chief Hopocan he waits for them. They come maybe soon. You send white brothers to make them run?"

McDermott translated the request.

"That we will!" said Colonel Elliott. "We'll have Caldwell and his company on the trail by daybreak." He called out, "Oh, Loring! fetch Captain Caldwell," then said to McDermott, "you'd better make ready yourself."

"Me?" asked McDermott uneasily.

"None other," Colonel Elliott answered promptly. "Caldwell 'll need a guide that can talk for him."

The day young George's father came home to say that he was being sent to lead Captain Caldwell's soldiers and rangers to the threatened Delaware villages the boy was in the garden pulling weeds, not because he was required to do so, but for the reason that he could find no better job at the moment. There were no youths of his own age, and the grown people were like

strangers, talking differently and having different ways from the ways of the McDermotts. Seeing his father crossing the small field he ran forward to join him. They entered the cabin together, George holding firmly to the fringe on the sleeve of McDermott's hunting-shirt. Inside his father told his mother:

"Well, I'm av'yagin' some more."

Charity replied: "Oh, law! seem like a mortal never does have peace!"

But young George, manœuvering even closer to his father, looked up and asked insistently: "Whe' yo goin', pappy; whe' yo goin'?"

"Hesh!" commanded his father, "and go 'way 'fore I stumble over you." He went to the corner for his musket and powder-horn.

But George clung to him, repeating: "Whe' yo goin', tell me whe' yo goin'?"

"Hesh that clamor," ordered his father, wresting his sleeve free in order to examine his musket.

His mother looked down at him with a mournful smile. "Be good boy now an' don't trouble yo' pappy. He's agoin' a long ways off."

George set up a pleading: "Take me 'long!"

His father said: "Don't talk like a loon; where's that big pouch, Char'ty?"

"I ain't no loon," protested George shrilly; "which way *yo'* goin'? Down by the riv*er?* Yo' goin' down by the riv*er?*"

Filling up the pouch, his father answered absently: "By the river, yes; now keep offen me."

George tried once more: "Take *me* 'long? Pl——"

"Hesh that clamor!" shouted his father.

George backed half way across the cabin. There he paused, thoughtfully, a little disheartened. Then sud-

denly an idea popped into his eight-year-old head. He turned and shuffled quietly out of the cabin. His father was going out into the wilderness, away from this monotonous, stranger-filled stockaded outpost. He was going by way of the river trail. George saw, or thought he saw, a chance to go along.

Across the field and down the road he ran, past the sentry and out over the rutt-tracked road that led southward beside the river. If only, he thought as his small moccasins thudded on the dry earth, if only he could get far enough away from the stockade his father, riding past and finding him, would have to take him on the journey. That was what he wanted, to be with his father for whose tall figure he had a strange shy adoration, to be away from Detroit where the people, he had discovered, were different from himself and his mother. On he ran, now in a fear that he would be unable to get far enough away from the fort by the time his father overtook him. Into the forest his young legs sped, his heels flying up behind him.

Young George had got about a mile south of the stockade when the sound of hoofbeats on the trail brought him to a halt. Turning, he slipped behind a bush and lay there panting. The horseman drew nearer. Raising up, he saw the starred forehead of a roan and then a long, buckskin leg in a stirrup. He jumped up.

"Hi, pappy!"

His father stopped and behind him Captain Caldwell and the others pulled on their bridle reins, saying: "Whoa!"

Young George came forward under his father's astonished and angry eyes.

"You plumb fool boy!"

"Haw!" laughed one of the horsemen.

Young George began to feel that he had made a mistake.

"Here!" his father reached down and he was swiftly jerked up on the saddle. The mare wheeled and he flung his arms about his father's waist. "Ketch up with you a few mile down," muttered his father to Captain Caldwell, and trotted back along the line of soldiers and rangers toward the fort.

They rode without speaking until at the gate his father set him down. "Go tell yore mammy to tan yore jacket," his father told him grimly, "you plumb fool boy! An' don't let me ketch you beyond the stockade no mo'!"

Young George ran back inside the gate, frightened and humiliated.

In the cabin he told his mother of his disgrace.

She scolded softly: "Pesterin' your po' pappy thataway an' scarin' him by runnin' off! I won't use no stick, but I feel right grievous."

He said stubbornly: "But why cain't I go 'long never? I wouldn't be no trouble."

She tried to rally him with: " 'Cause yore bound to stay with yore mammy and look after her while yore pappy's gone away."

George drummed with his heels against the rung of the stool. "But it hain't no good here. I don't favor it an' I never will!" He scowled back an impulse to cry and sat silent.

His mother sighed. "No, I reckon not. These folks hain't sociable like the Kerliny folks, that's the truth." Unexpectedly her shoulders dropped and she bent over the table, resting her forehead on her arm.

"Maybe," young George suggested hopefully, "pap-

py'll take us away when he comes back from the Indians."

The dark crown of his mother's head stirred wearily in answer. She sat with her face hidden for some moments and when she arose her cheeks seemed white and streaked.

Young George asked uneasily: "Y'ain't been cryin'?"

Her lips trembled, but she smiled: "Big folks don't take on with tears!" Moving to the shelf she reached for a bottle. "Run to the tavern and fetch some salt for mammy; I declare I give yore pappy the last mite."

George took the bottle and went out.

He still felt badly because his father had reprimanded him and because one of the soldiers had laughed. And it seemed to him that somehow his father had treated his mother meanly too. Else why should she have been so sad? When he got big, he thought resentfully, he would take her away from his father and build a cabin of his own. He would have a musket by that time, and would be distinguished far and wide as a great hunter of bears and catamounts. Bears and catamounts; he wondered if there were any back in the Kerliny country. For maybe that was where he would build his cabin.

XI

IN Mingo Bottom, which was three days westward from Fort Pitt and nine days southeast of the land of the Delawares, about five hundred Pennsylvania volunteer militiamen had gathered to assail the Wyandot and Delaware towns near Sandusky and drive the Indians farther into the wilderness. They paused in Mingo Bottom to organize, plan their line of attack and elect their commander. Of these men there were two of equally high rank: Colonel William Crawford and Colonel David Williamson. Crawford was the more popular among the volunteers as a whole, but Williamson had in solid support of him nearly a hundred soldiers who had been with him when he butchered the ninety-six Christianized Delawares at Salem. But though these men and many of their friends voted for Williamson, it was Colonel Crawford who was chosen to lead the way toward Upper Sandusky.

They began their march into that long, unbroken stretch of forest in the manner of conquerors by faith, not by strategy. When the tramp of their feet over the trail roused a wild turkey or goose from cover within sight of them they shot at it and ran crashing through the underbrush in search of its fallen carcase. By night and by day they built their fires hugely, unmindful of the flakes that brightened their camping grounds or of the smoke that lay significantly above the topmost branches of the oaks, the maples, walnuts and sycamores.

For eight days Colonel Crawford's forces marched through the forest shade, going over the rolling land

to the place of the tangled underbrush and swamps; and on the morning of the ninth they came upon a hastily deserted Wyandot village. There for the first time did they show any caution; after trampling the vegetable gardens and razing the dwellings, they proceeded forward in comparative quiet, hoping, as they reminded one another, that when they met the Indians they would have the advantage of surprising them and make the battle a short one.

Mid-afternoon of that calm June day found Colonel Crawford and his men coming out of the towering forest into a stretch of bushy ground and cranberry marsh. Ahead of them was a grove fringed with birches and it was their object to cross the open land in that direction.

In a ragged column of twos the militiamen were moving forward when from the shade of that clump of trees there came a sharp whining through the air and a cluster of round shot lobbed sickeningly into the bodies of the men who led the double file. Three men dropped as the rest plunged for cover, wallowing through the cranberry bog. A moment later they were in concealment and over that space where five hundred soldiers had stood there was now no sign of life or movement save where a bush or two trembled above a militiaman's crouching form.

On the skirting of the grove some men appeared, a number of Canadian rangers and Indians, but a voice from among the trees clipped out: "Come back, you idiots or 'fore God I'll shoot you down!" and Captain Caldwell ran forward with upraised pistol.

Leaning against the bole of a butternut, McDermott saw the men waver and turn, their action hurried by a volley of shot which ripped into and among the trees

from the bushy flat land beyond. At the head of a hundred Canadian rangers under Captain Caldwell and nearly two hundred Delawares under Captain Pipe, McDermott had reached the Wyandot country that morning. There, in a town a few miles to the north, of where they now were, they had been met by a Wyandot runner who informed Captain Caldwell that the Long Knives were within a day's march of him and that they were following the old trail up from the Muskingum. Using this information, Captain Caldwell had continued forward and had gone into ambush near the trail.

Now the shot was tearing through the leaves and the tall grass. Caldwell, knowing he had the smaller force, would not attack, but was waiting for a band of Shawanese to join him from the south; Crawford, himself surprised when he had intended to surprise the enemy, not knowing the size of the force against him and finding that the volunteers preferred the ooze of the cranberry marsh to the dry ground ahead, dared not move forward. But meanwhile both sides continued a sharp, personal firing.

McDermott rested with his back against the butternut and his unused musket cradled in his lap. Throughout the eight years since he had taken the oath to support King George as a loyal subject he had never once fired upon a white man; and it was not his purpose to do so now. He had, or if he had he was unaware of it, no land of his own, no memories or dreams that attached him to one place more than to another. His family killed, his youth passed among the Senecas, his young manhood spent in the wilderness and as a runner and interpreter for Lord Dunmore, no especial ground was dear to him. The dark barbarians, they

were his friends. And it was his work, as he understood it, to help them retain the Ohio country, which he believed was their rightful own. But he had no hatred, no lust for murder; he was content to carry out the orders of Colonel Elliott. Those orders had never required him to fight.

Near the edge of the wood rangers and Indians were crouching behind trees with the long barrels of their muskets thrust out before them. Their faces were keen, grim and browned to a man. The hardier of them were firing, hammer on flintlock and the ball speeding to a mark among the bushes and the cranberry bog. A steady confusion of sound made the woods ring like dully battered metal. The crash of the shot, the cry as of a drowning wolf as an Indian fell, the rattling singing of shot through the twigs and leaves and the gasping shouts of Captain Caldwell all combined to make a symphony of clangor.

From that wavy brush and cranberry bog, on which the shadows from the wood were stretching out like a long, blue mist, the bullets came with a deadly whining. But the men kept down and out of sight and it was as if the bushes themselves were wielding the muskets.

Captain Caldwell, his short, usually erect figure now bent eagerly forward, paced up and down inside the fringe of trees and peered out at the enemy. Would they continue their attack? They couldn't lie there, that was certain. But if they did attack what would he do? In the whole force inside the wood there was not an implement with which a breastwork could be dug up. He strode jerkily about, cautioning the men to be wary of their fire.

Evening was coming on. Within the hour the sun would have set and fighting would cease for the night.

It was at a time when the sunlight had withdrawn that the bushes out in front began to tremble with movement of the men behind them. Now they were like a saffron sea, restless with undercurrents.

Unexpectedly there was a shout, long drawn out by many voices and the bulk of the five hundred militiamen rose hesitantly to their feet, gripped their muskets and plunged forward.

Raising his pistol, Captain Caldwell needlessly commanded: "Fire!" A charge of shot struck at the advancing men and a few of them dropped, their bodies instantly disappearing in the brush. But the militiamen came on.

Indians and rangers, sighted their muskets from the edge of the woods, but stepped backward. All along the line there was a frenzy of motion as the attacked reloaded their clumsy weapons. Before they had fired a second volley many had given ground.

McDermott stood up from behind the tree which shielded him as the first of the militiamen entered the wood. Before him Caldwell was shouting, "Stand their fire! stand—" the officer's voice was cut short as a bullet struck him in the ribs. He staggered sidewise as if he had lost his balance.

McDermott caught him as he toppled backward. A sharp-faced Delaware, retreating but still doggedly determined, silently bent down and lifted up the officer's legs. Carrying him, the two men stumbled through the grove and out into the bog at the other side.

The three of them lay behind a bush while the gunpowder flashed from the wood and hot lead whirred above their heads. From the vacated ground came an exultant shouting and now and again a figure stood indistinctly in the dusk.

Night came and the firing ceased. There was no sound but Caldwell's groaning. It was wet where he lay and he had got the belief that the water seeping through his jacket was his own blood.

Holding Caldwell's head in his lap, McDermott endeavored to calm him, "It ain't mortal, Caldwell. Never teched the guts or you'd be vomitin'."

"But the blood! My back," moaned Caldwell.

"Sho', that hain't nothing but bog-water." McDermott frowned anxiously. With Caldwell down, the behavior of the rangers and Delawares was uncertain.

The long night passed and in the haggard dawn Caldwell lifted his head from McDermott's cramped knees and looked wildly over the motionless bog. Querulously he inquired: "Shawanese come, have they?"

"They'll be along," McDermott answered.

The Delaware who had been with McDermott had crawled to a place of greater safety nearby and now lay eating a handful of cracked corn despite the warning of a fellow warrior who muttered that the dried food would swell his bowels so that a musket ball would cause them greater damage than if they were less full. To the left a ranger was concernedly wiping the mud from the walnut stock of his musket.

From a bush between the grove and the ground where rangers and Indians waited there was a flutter; a sand crane rose with beating wings and there was a tension as the watchers gripped their muskets. Everywhere was a sense of restless waiting, anticipations of the sight of the militiamen appearing from the edge of the grove to continue their attack.

But the sun climbed high in the skies and sent hot rays from its greater eminence and still the militiamen did not attack. And it seemed to McDermott that the

two opposing forces would remain in their deadlock forever, that Caldwell would die in his arms and his body grow black and bloated under that baleful stare from the heavens. About him the Delawares were running their tongues over their dry lips and peering with suppressed hatred through the bushes toward that silent grove of trees. They could not attack; the militiamen, it seemed, would not.

Late that afternoon in the forest back of the rangers and Indians there was a stealthy tramping and where the trail opened into the prairie land the first of a band of Shawanese came into sight, a short man whose face had been painted a bright red and who carried a musket in his hand and a knife and tomahawk in his leather belt. He paused a moment. From a bush in front of the Shawanese warrior a Delaware got to his feet, swung a war-club aloft and howled with a trembling fury in his voice. The Shawanese stepped forward, followed by nearly two hundred others. And now from every bush rangers and Indians appeared and the clamor was loud. Over the wet ground toward the grove that concealed the militiamen they went like eager runners.

McDermott remained with the wounded officer, but the others all made the patch of woods their goal. They ran, slipping and sprawling through the bog and into the edge of the woodland. And in this attack to regain the grove and drive the Long Knives out of the Wyandot and Delaware country not a man among them fell. They had reached the wood and their howling echoes had died away before they realized that the ground had been undisputed.

Darkness fell, leaving the horde of Indians and the few rangers in possession of an empty wood. For at the

sight of the Shawanese reinforcements the Long Knives had made a quick retreat back through the marsh and bog and tangled forest, hoping to get to Mingo Bottom.

Gaining the abandoned grove, the rangers penetrated to the further fringe by the birch trees and turned back, satisfied that for the moment their job was done. But both Delawares and Shawanese, the one heated to blood lust by the long day of waiting and aggravated by the remembrance of their massacred cousins and brothers at Salem, the others eager to vent the fury into which they had worked themselves in the war dance, prowled like wolves on the trail. Flint sparked in the nightshade, torches flared above brightly painted faces and the tramp of moccasins sounded as the Indians struck the tracks of the militiamen that led southeast through the cranberry bog.

Running close to the ground, the Indians crossed the bog and spread out through the forest. Ahead of them the keener ones could hear the thud of many boots in the distance. Through the night they ran, shortening the distance between themselves and the retreating Long Knives. From time to time there were sounds to the right and left, in the marshland at either side of the trail. These they heeded, but passed on to fling themselves upon the backs of the main body of Long Knives.

Morning came and the hunt continued. But soon after midday the Indians who still pursued came up to the bulk of the militiamen, three hundred odd. But by this time their reckless haste had cut down their own number to a little more than half of what it had been. Both parties stood for fire, but after the first volley the Delawares and Shawanese turned back and the

militiamen, leaving eleven members on the trail, pushed on.

It was on their way back from the skirmish that the Indians found means for their revenge. In the flight through the darkened forest, of swamps and marsh and interlaced undergrowth, many of the party which had set out from Mingo Bottom had lost their way and were now cut off by the Indians who roamed in a wide front as they returned toward the Delaware village where they were to meet Caldwell's Canadian rangers.

Of those hapless men struggling in the wilderness there were about ninety. And some of these braved death in conflict and escaped, wading muddy and torn through swamp and briar. But most of them were routed from cover. Fatigued and outnumbered, they gave themselves into the hands of their enemies who with fierce exultance carried them to a fate far worse than they could have had in combat.

Infuriating the Indians even beyond their normal war-pitch was the recognition that many of their captives were those who, under Colonel Williamson some months earlier, had butchered the Christianized Delaware families at Salem. And this mounting madness was upon them when they captured Colonel Crawford. In his flight his horse had dropped and he had lost the trail and was wandering confusedly through a patch of brush when they took him.

Williamson himself had escaped with the three hundred and on Crawford, as leader of the second party, was to fall the vengeance intended for the officer of the first. Bound and struck and taunted, he was led with the other captives back to the Delaware village where the Indians were to rejoin the rangers.

McDermott was there when they arrived. It was late in the afternoon, almost evening, and after having aided in providing litters for Captain Caldwell and the other wounded, he had gone with the rangers to the point of rendezvous arranged between Caldwell and Captain Pipe, leader of the Delawares. The village was that to which he had gone some years before when the Delawares as a tribe had divided. It was on a small stream not far from the now extinguished council-fire of the tribe's. There were the same bark tents beside the stream's green banks and a stand of flourishing corn in the bottom-land. As he and the rangers arrived a few squaws were solicitously tending the village fire and a runner lay breathing heavily on a mat, yet regarding the stirring flames with malicious pleasure.

McDermott never forgot the sight that followed.

Toward evening he and the rangers sitting some distance from the fire heard the sounds of the returning warriors from the forest. They were loud, there was jeering in their voices; and as these fiercely triumphant noises reached the village the faces of the squaws grew hideously dark with rage. Dropping whatever they were doing, they ran in a jostling bunch down the trail, screaming imprecations.

" . . . after the captives," explained a ranger in a hard, strained tone, as the leathern skirted women disappeared toward the trail.

Another nodded. Then there was silence.

McDermott's mouth tightened up instinctively and he stared broodingly toward the forest from which the noise was growing louder.

A ranger whose round eyes stared as if hypnotized at the path where the women had disappeared, caught

his trembling lip between his teeth. When he spoke the words came forth hesitantly: "Rabbit the wretches! They'll be at their tricks of torturing!"

That was what McDermott was thinking. But, like the others, he did not answer.

Over the field the sounds rose in a virago's clamor, deepened by surly, vicious laughter. The warriors appeared, Captain Pipe walking near the lead and behind him among the painted braves came the prisoners, bound and flinching from the women who beat at them with sticks and screamed:

"Murderers of our husbands, die!"

"In your own blood you shall be cooked!"

"Fighters of children!"

"Ai, in their blood they fry!"

"Our faggots will roast your hide!"

"Meat for the buzzards!"

And the braves stepped aside to give the women more freedom to strike and jab the hand-tied prisoners. And while striking their panting voices railed: "I avenge my brother; I avenge my grandson! May the Long Knives rot and their spirits be seen no more!"

At the head of the prisoners and between two braves walked Crawford, his chin raised and his cheek smeared with blood where a stick had gashed the skin. His coat was torn and muddy, his shirt ripped and his dark forelock lay in a mop at one side of his livid brow. Back of him came a smaller man, his wrists tied with thongs behind him like Crawford's, his shoulders sagging and his eyes darting from one side to the other, anywhere to escape meeting the vulpine gaze of the women.

As they entered the village one of the squaws ran forward and grasped a flaming branch from the fire;

turning, her short legs carried her back to the disorganized column where she thrust the brand toward Crawford's face. He flinched, but before the fire touched him a brave struck the woman's arm and muttered:

"Fool, he is to die more slowly!"

They came on and the rangers met them, already remonstrating against the torture that was to follow.

"The white captain has said 'no burning!' "

"The prisoners must be taken to the town beyond the lake!"

Captain Pipe bawled majestically: "Who speaks for the white captain? Who dares order Hopocan and his brothers to spare their prisoners!"

McDermott faced him: "I speak for the white captain. No burning!"

Half a dozen braves rushed up excitedly, hands on bloodstained tomahawks. This obstruction offered by the rangers only precipitated the action to which they had keyed themselves. Squaws and braves alike ran angrily for faggots and those who remained menacingly encircled McDermott and the rangers.

"Burn the white chief who makes war on the Delawares!"

"Burn the white chief whose men murdered our brothers and sisters at Salem!"

"Stand back," Captain Pipe shouted to McDermott. "My warriors are strong and will have their way!"

Pushed and jostled, McDermott's eyes darkened. His musket was knocked flying and a brown hand of an Indian reached for his belt. "Best take caution," he heard a ranger advise him and then he was driven to one side. The disorderly column swung on toward the fire.

McDermott picked up his musket and stood irresolute, feeling sick and powerless. The rangers had dwindled away and were making ready for their march back to Detroit under command of a sergeant who had rightly decided that they were no longer needed to combat the Long Knives. But McDermott, his bowels gripped by a spreading nausea, remained. Ahead of him, through the great cluster of maddened, revolving Delawares, a hickory sapling was being stripped; a brave with a long rope was leading Crawford toward it while others hurriedly piled faggots in a wide circle about the sapling. As they were making the rope fast a brave ran forward and jerked off Crawford's jacket while the doomed man stood for a moment with his hands untied. Behind him a squaw ripped at his shirt, clawing it from his shoulders. . . . Finally he stood naked, secured to the pole by the long rope. His head raised in anguish and his muscles straining at his bonds, he walked the length of the rope while a brave carried the flames from the central fire to the circle of faggots.

The blaze spread. Sitting on his mat with folded arms, Captain Pipe glowered at Crawford. About him the braves were watching keenly, gauging the officer's fortitude. At the farther side, nearly opposite Pipe, stood the small man, Crawford's fellow captive, his hands behind his back and his wrists in thongs. His eyes were bulging and his jaw hung down. The evening sky was lowering, seemed to blacken suddenly as the red tongues of flame leaped eagerly into a completed circle.

McDermott sat down weakly, fascinated with horror. He saw a squaw stoop down and fling a burning faggot against Crawford's naked body. McDermott cried, but the constricted muscles in his throat stifled

the sound until he felt as if he were about to choke. Crawford winced, walked quickly about the pole. The rope wound tighter. For a moment his head sagged dejectedly, then he retraced his steps.

The night was loud with the lustful clamor. A brave in a frenzy scooped bare hands into the bright embers and flung them at Crawford. Flames licked nearer, scorching the man's skin. The smell of it mingled with the smell of sweating Indians. . . .

Crawford dropped to his knees. His lips moving with soundless words he sprawled and lay motionless. A brave leaped like a deer over the burning faggots, his knife in his hand. The knife made a circle above the prone man's head and the uncovered skull showed white . . . A handful of coals made a long red streak above the faggots' flames, Crawford stood up unsteadily, took two turns about the pole and for the last time fell.

There was a shout and a brave, his face heavy with unutterable gloating, began a dance around the outer circle of the faggots. Others joined in, followed by the squaws. Only Captain Pipe, McDermott and the prisoner, the little man who had been brought with Crawford, remained out of it.

The little man was sitting with his back bowed and his head against his knees, hiding his eyes.

Captain Pipe walked over to McDermott. "Come," he said, "it is enough. The anger of my young men is appeased. The little one shall be spared."

McDermott arose and followed him into his tent. They sat for some time in silence and McDermott was glad of the darkness. His lips were working strangely and his throat was hot and dry. He had never seen Crawford before, did not know his name. All he knew

was that there was a body lying in the midst of burning faggots and encircled by howling Indians. That sight, that execution—his back turned cold as from an icy wind.

XII

THE summer days passed slowly. Young George helped carry water for his mother, and picked roasting ears which were cooked in the ever-lighted hearth. He liked that, for it gave him a feeling of importance, as though he really was the natural protector of the home as she had once suggested. Then his father came home, and he wasn't allowed to carry water any more. His father said solemnly that either the buckets were too big or the boy too little, he didn't know which, but it was one or the other.

Nothing was the same as it had been before his father's return with Captain Caldwell's rangers. His mother, it seemed to him, was continually worried—about his father, he surmised, who would sit for hour on end on a stool by the hearth without speaking, his dark, bony hands clasped over his buckskin knee and his eyes staring at the floor. His father had been like that ever since he came home. As usual the sun peeped up each morning and set each night, and his father spent half the time bent like a crone over the fire. And when he raised his head George would be surprised, and surprised again to see that familiar face now so unfamiliar. Long perpendicular lines streaked each cheek and drew down the corners of his father's mouth; and the lids of his eyes seemed to have become heavy and wrinkled.

Sometimes his mother would say with a mournful chiding: "Angus, don't stare thataway. It makes a body creepy."

Then his father would look up and slowly nod his head.

All that winter he sat thus when he was at home, doing only the simplest tasks such as carrying water, splitting wood, and clearing the garden for the spring. And watching him young George would often feel his own lip trembling because of the tired way in which his father's head drooped.

But that time passed, though so slowly that the change was scarcely perceptible until it had been wholly achieved. And meanwhile young George began going about by himself, wandering in the adjacent forest and wishing he had a musket. His father's face lighted up again and he became the same as ever except that the lines remained and there were spots of gray in his straight black hair.

Once George asked his father: "Pappy, when kin I have a musket?"

"When yore old enough," his father told him.

"Pappy, when'll I be old enough?"

At that his father scrutinized him closely, taking stock of his slim but well-knit body. "Have a musket when yore high as the top of the musket bar'l," he said at last, adding, " 'twon't be long, neither; not by the way yore shootin' up."

From that day his father's weapon in the corner of the cabin became his measuring stick.

"Ain't high enough yet, Georgie boy," his mother told him when he was eleven. "But yore acomin' on."

At that he grinned and squared his shoulders a little. "Ain't lackin' hardly an inch," he said.

"Grow right fast," suggested Charity, "and maybe yore father will buy you one at the sto' when he comes back."

"Once I git one," he boasted, "I'll shoot more game'n this hull town could eat."

"Land o' livin'; will you now?" His mother smiled in mock surprise.

His father came home one day in late October. George stood aside, watching him kiss his mother and unsling his pack from his shoulders.

"My, you've been a long spell!" said his mother.

"Takes time to travel," his father answered, "where's George?"

George moved forward slowly, becoming embarrassed as he heard his mother say, "the boy's pinin' his heart out for that musket you promised him."

His father straightened, leaning a little backward as he braced his shoulders, and looked down at George. "You hold up your end of the bargain, kin you?"

George stood silent.

His father reached for the musket and held it out before him. "Stand up now."

Eager but diffident, George placed his back against the long, ungainly musket.

"Sho', he kin," encouraged his mother; "stretch, Georgie."

He stretched. He waited.

"Jist a leetle—" George heard his father saying.

"Over," his mother cut in excitedly.

"Sho'," remonstrated his father: "You went an' jiggled it."

"Did I now!" challenged his mother. "Angus McDermott if you don't git that boy a musket I'll be that mean to you!"

"Hesh!" his father commanded. "I been of a mind to all along."

He got the musket the next day and, with an old powder-horn and a pouch of shot, went hunting.

"Hain't the season for bear yet," his father advised him jocularly as he left.

"Reckon it hain't," said young George coolly. He had got what he wanted and his temper was not to be ruffled by any references to his inexperience as a hunter. Even on the road when a soldier guyed him that his musket would walk away from him if he didn't keep a sharp eye, he ignored the insult and walked on, carrying the heavy piece lying flat over his shoulder.

But it was not a great while before the stockade grew accustomed to the sight of a small figure with a large gun going to and from the forest. And in December of that year he got a companion. Some men had been out tracking a bear and one of their dogs had been so badly lacerated by the beast's claws that it could barely make its way back to the stockade. George found it and took it to the cabin.

"Why," his mother said when she saw it: "'tain't more'n a pup."

When George fed it the next morning he called, "Hyuh pup, hyuh pup," and thereafter no other name seemed to suit it quite so well.

Once with the pup he shot a wild turkey and young George bore it back to his mother.

She smiled. Her eyes shone proudly and she told him: "Reckon the best shot in the hull of Kerliny couldn't 'a done any finer."

"Law!" he breathed, swelling his chest. To him it was the highest praise he could have been given. "Law! You claim that for the truth?"

His mother assented, soberly smiling.

XIII

McDERMOTT came through the open doorway of the cabin. He had been to Colonel Elliott's chamber and there had been given a message to take to Chief Blue Jacket who was far to the south with his Shawanese warriors. It concerned a treaty between the Shawanese and the Long Knives and in it the British agent requested Blue Jacket to oppose the treaty until after representatives of theirs had come to Detroit to learn what the commandant had to say to them. The Long Knives were making settlements inside the Ohio country and treaty with the Indians to withdraw farther into the wilderness. Though that land was now known as the Northwest Territory and though the British had agreed to withdraw from it, Colonel Elliott still showed a lively interest in the fate of the Indians. "Where's that leather pouch I tote my provender in?" he asked Charity.

She looked at him wearily. "You ain't agoin' vyagin' agin?"

He nodded, adding quickly: " 'Twon't be but only for a short spell this time."

"I hope so," said Charity doubtfully, "last time you said that, but it was two months afore I laid eyes on you."

"Waren't the same last time, nohow," her husband answered patiently. "Jist down to the Shawanese country, 'twon't be hardly a month."

Charity sighed.

"Now don't you fret," Angus counselled and took up his axe from beside the hearth to chop a supply of wood.

"Don't need wood," Charity told him, "George's been achoppin' all day yesterday."

"Suits me. Where's George?"

"Off with the pup and his musket."

He slung the pouch over his shoulder and examined his musket. "Well," he hesitated. "Sooner I start the sooner I'll be back." Stooping, he kissed her briskly and went out the door.

He would have liked, he thought regretfully as he left the trading post, to have seen George, but that would have meant waiting until nightfall and he disliked losing as many hours as would carry him to the north shores of Lake Erie. He strode on, following the river to the lake on the southward journey.

Eight days of marching brought him to the Scioto and there he noted that despite the rumor that the Shawanese were about to sign a treaty they were in no peaceful mood. For the family of Indians he met there greeted him angrily and with suspicion. Had it not been for his recognition by the sachem he would have been driven from the village. And going farther down the Scioto there were other signs that the temper of the Shawanese remained violent.

It was in the evening and the moon was pale and round above the stipped trees when McDermott came within sight of the fires of Blue Jacket's family of Shawanese. From a distance he could tell that there was an unusual stirring in the camp; there were loud, berating cries, not in chorus, but sounding from men individually angry. And at once he had a horror that some one was about to be put to death. But he walked on grimly, his musket tucked under his arm and his free hand on the hilt of his hunting-knife.

Along the path that led among the tents, bright and

vivid underneath the moon, he passed toward that leaping fire around which a number of squaws and braves had gathered. Going nearer, he spoke in a challenging voice. A brave with his blanket wrapped about his shoulders turned and raised his hand: "What white man speaks the Shawanese?"

Beyond the brave who had answered McDermott saw a group bent over a prostrate figure. He said, "I speak the word of the white captain beyond the lake!" and walked past the brave who had greeted him, his eyes intent on the Indians nearer the fire.

The reply came: "The Shawanese heeds the word of the white captain."

McDermott halted. "I seek the great war chief, Blue Jacket."

"Ai, Blue Jacket," said the brave, nodding. "Who will find Blue Jacket? He has taken his young men hunting."

"I will wait," said McDermott and drew nearer the fire. His voice was calm, almost disinterested as he asked, "What have you there?" and pointed toward the body which the taunting Indians had surrounded.

The answer came not from the Indians but from the supine figure itself; and the words were in wrathful backwoods English: "Hey! lemme to my feet so's I kin go to spilin' some more o' these God damned varmints!"

McDermott bent down quickly, staring into the shadows made by the braves standing in the moonlight. That voice was familiar, more so than the black visage which he made out on the ground. He asked sharply: "Who air you?"

"What and the hell! What there's left o' me's still Kenton!"

McDermott's throat tightened and he looked warily up at the Indians, themselves no less surprised than he. "Take caution," he said, "or they'll roast the both of us. How'd they ketch you?"

"Shot me offen my mare," Kenton jerked up at him, "the buzzards."

"Y'hain't been a killin' none of 'em?" McDermott asked anxiously.

"I aimed to an' I aim to yet," Kenton answered bitterly, " 'less they go to roastin' me pretty sudden-like." That was Kenton's only comment on his danger.

"I'll cut you loose," McDermott promised and looked hastily up into the moonlight toward the faces which he could not read. They had blacked Kenton and bound him near the fire, but they were not in a fury and it was likely that a day or possibly several days would pass before the execution. Meanwhile he would be taunted and whipped by old men and squaws, jeered at as the swift Long Knife who had been taken by swifter Shawanese.

A brave leaning over asked sharply: "How speaks the Long Knife?"

McDermott answered steadily: "The Long Knife speaks no word. Again I shall talk to him; he is a scout and knows what the Long Knives are thinking." He paused, sitting back on his moccasined heels and looked up at the braves. "It is well that the white captain beyond the lake and the Shawanese chieftains should know what the Long Knives are thinking."

The unsuspecting braves admitted this to be true. "Ai, it is the truth, the very truth." And one of them fell to reminiscing of the November four years past when they had thought themselves secure for the winter on the banks of the Scioto and then had been unex-

pectedly faced by Clark's thousand men who had driven them farther into the wilderness and burned their goods and cabins.

At length McDermott told them: "I will remain with the Long Knife."

A few looked at him, demurring: "He is our prisoner."

But others said: "He is the friend of the white captain beyond the lake, who gives us food. The white captain is also the enemy of the Long Knives."

"Then let him speak," said a brave and, taking up his blanket, moved toward his tent. After a while the rest of them followed and McDermott and Kenton were left alone.

Kenton lay for a time in silence, McDermott squatting beside him. The strangeness of the meeting affected them both, making days gone by loom up vividly in their minds. Once they had been friends and fellow scouts, but nearly a decade and a half had passed since then and now each was wondering about the other. Moments slipped past and the clear round moon soared high.

Kenton was first to speak, and his words surprised McDermott. "Makes me feel right grievous," he said, "to see you asettin' there Angus." His blackened face stared upward, shining in the moonlight.

"Sho', now how's that, Simon?"

"Might' near soon see you dead, I would."

His words puzzled McDermott and made him uneasy. McDermott expostulated softly: "A dead man hain't wuth a pinch of snuff, Simon."

Kenton said slowly: "Wuth more'n a quick man with a hated name!"

McDermott looked down at him with a show of calmness. "It's me you mean, hain't it, Simon?"

"Reckon it hain't nobody else."

Slowly McDermott asked: "Who's adoin' all this hatin', Simon?"

Kenton's tone showed exasperation. He fairly snapped: "The folks you turned agin'!"

McDermott considered this, anxiously searching his mind. After a while he said: "What folks air they, Simon?" It hurt him for Kenton to talk like that.

Suddenly Kenton burst out: "What folks air they! They air the Virginny folks, the Pennsylvany folks, the Kentucky folks! Where was you when they was a fightin' for their freedom? Wasn't you ashoulderin' a musket on t'other side! Where was you when the Indians roasted Crawford! Wasn't you asettin' in with 'em! You ask me why yo're hated! What and the hell!" In his indignation he half twisted himself about until he sat, his hands behind him, his blackened face staring at McDermott.

McDermott grimly returned his stare: "I reckon it's the rebels that hates me, is that it Simon?"

"Hah!" Kenton contorted his mouth as though about to spit. "You talk of rebels! Rebels we was, but rebels we hain't no more! We're free-born, by God, an' we aim our youngsters should be thataway."

"Hold your tongue," McDermott commanded sternly. An Indian, roused by Kenton's loud, irascible tone, had thrust his head out of a tent flap beyond the fire and was watching them. Kenton lay down again, wrenching angrily at the thongs about his wrists. McDermott continued, "Looky here, you make out like I—" he stopped confusedly, unable to continue. He wanted to explain away the charges that had been

made against him; there was so much he felt he could say for himself and so little he could put into words. It was all true and yet it was all false. He had not turned upon his own people, had not gone over to the British. For when he had left Fort Pitt and gone into the Ohio country it had all been one people divided up into colonies and he had been merely following out the orders of his commanders, the same men under whom Kenton himself had fought. And then in some unexplainable way those commanders, men like Lord Dunmore, ceased to represent the government and a new government took its place. And meanwhile McDermott had been many miles away, giving his allegiance to the old. He felt that. He also felt that if he had remained in the Virginia country he would have joined the frontiersmen in their battles. For a moment he wished that he had never made that journey to Detroit. But then a flood of bitterness rose up in him, making him defiant. They hated him!

Kenton was speaking: "I've heered folks say they'd slice ten year offen their natural span to put yore neck in a halter, Angus. Why, after little Knight come back an' told how you set there an' watched the Delawares torture Crawford there was folks in Kentucky that talked like they'd go into the Indian country jist to skin yore hide. By God, I have. It's the truth I'm speaking; turn me loose or leave me here as yore a mind to."

"I'm beholden to you," said McDermott shortly. They hated him, did they! Wanted his hide! Covering the pain with a sour grin he said in a monotone: "Only a spell now an' the moon'll be down; I'll cut you loose an' you kin run for it."

"You say you will!" gasped Kenton, unable to hide his eagerness. "I hain't hankerin' to roast none, Angus."

He rubbed his cheek against the shoulder of his hunting-shirt. "Damn paint itches; reckon I'm blacker'n a Virginny nigger."

McDermott did not answer. Beyond Kenton the fire was smoldering and shadows were closing in on the moonbeams, extinguishing them. "Keep silent for a spell," he urged Kenton grimly, looking ahead into the blackness of the night which had blotted out the trees, the land, the tents, all but the smoldering pile of embers.

Time passed and in the silence a hoot-owl threw into the night a profound, deep-toned question, repeating it at intervals. McDermott sat there, his body taut and his mind racing dizzily. Of a sudden it came to him that if Kenton did not start shortly he would not have much of a friend of the darkness for his long trip through the Indian country down to the shores of the Ohio. And he needed as much concealment of his movements as a long night would afford in order to get through safely. And taking his hunting-knife out of his belt, McDermott leaned forward, whispered, "Easy now," and slipped the sharp blade through the thongs that bound Kenton's wrists. There were others about his ankles; Kenton chafed his hands and forearms as McDermott undid them.

Kenton lay stretched out, feeling his leg muscles, making ready for a spring. His hand reached out and pulled at a hummock of half-dried grass with which he rubbed the black paint, the execution mark, from his face. "You aimin' to run fur it too, Angus?" he asked under his breath.

"I'm bidin' here," McDermott answered shortly.

Kenton whistled softly. "What and the hell! they'll kill you shore!"

McDermott did not reply. But as Kenton lay there, hesitating to depart, McDermott told him: "Git along, Simon. Don't mind me, I hain't no cripple."

In the night's quiet a rough hand grasped his own and squeezed it; a lithe figure rose up out of the darkness, sliding away with the ease and precision of step of a stalking cat. Kenton was gone.

Kenton was gone. And McDermott, enveloping himself in his blanket, stretched out on the ground and waited for daylight. He was not thinking so much about the morning, for he was too concerned with the past. A vast body of nameless people hated him, though to them he had done no conscious wrong. Knight! That was the little man with the blubbering lips who had watched the burning of Crawford with the horror that came with knowing he would be next. But he had not been next. Captain Pipe had kept his word; Knight had lived and had been enabled to escape. And now there was a tale as monstrous as the act McDermott had seen committed; an act nearly as inhuman as the massacre of the hundred braves and squaws and children at Salem by Colonel Williamson and his men from about Fort Pitt. Instinctively, McDermott stared through the enveloping blackness toward the far distant Ohio shores, on the opposite side of which there were thousands of people who hated him, cutting him off from them, making him an outcast who had only the Indian country in which to live. It was men like Kenton who had been the rebels! "By God," he muttered to himself. Somehow he had thought from the way the rebels had been spoken of in Detroit that no man like Kenton would be among them, that only men who lived east of the Alleghanies, in a country foreign to him, had been among them.

He was awake when dawn came. Preceded by a chilly breeze which stirred the tree-tops and shook down more of the dead leaves that remained, the morning light was a cold, pale streak that parted the heavy skies. Objects began to stand out with an unreal clearness, the solid appearing tents, the sleeping fire showing pinkness under the ash from burned-up logs, the worn path black through the middle of the camp. Then the sun rose higher and the dawn grew colorful and warm. McDermott got up and threw some faggots on the fire from a pile nearby.

He was crouched above the reviving blaze, his hands held out above it, when the first Indian to come from his tent that morning appeared. The Indian stretched himself, rubbed his eyes, glanced toward McDermott and went back into the tent. A moment afterward another tent flap was opened and a squaw came heavily forth, carrying a bucket. She too looked at McDermott, then went down a bypath and through the dead cornstalks to the Scioto for water.

McDermott kept his posture by the fire, thoughtfully watching the stirring of life in the village. As the squaw returned a brave stepped forth from an adjacent tent and stood shivering in the morning air. Then, feeling the sunshine, he straightened himself and walked toward the fire.

Halfway between his tent and McDermott, the Indian paused, turned quickly about and marched back, now fully awake and apparently disturbed. He disappeared inside and the following instant grumbling voices sounded.

McDermott waited. Now one after the other four braves stepped out of the tent flap, gathered together and strode toward McDermott. Their moccasined feet

made an angry, outraged pad-pad-pad on the trail, and their gaze was sternly focussed on McDermott. Coming nearer, one drew a little ahead of the others and surveying the ground so closely that he would have discovered Kenton even if he had been under a leaf, he then looked at McDermott and asked with a show of cunning, "The Long Knife is gone? He is not here."

McDermott stood up and laughed unamusedly: "No, the Long Knife is not here."

They stared at him blankly. One, with a scar running down his cheeks to the corner of his full-lipped mouth, accused: "You let the Long Knife go!"

"Yes," agreed McDermott, teetering on the balls of his feet, one hand on his hunting-knife and the other holding his musket, "I let the Long Knife go!"

This confession made them stare in profound amazement. It was unheard of, incomprehensible. A prisoner, the property of the whole family, had been set free by the messenger of the white captain at the town beyond the lake. And he coolly admitted it, stood there and admitted it.

"Who cut the thongs that bound him?" asked one of the braves.

"I cut the thongs," said McDermott, and his bold eyes raked them recklessly.

The brave nearest McDermott announced with simple, regretful gravity: "The Long Knife's spirit we meant to destroy on the fire. Now he is gone."

"Ai, he is gone!" and they measured McDermott.

"Ai," repeated McDermott, "he is gone."

The camp was now fully awakened and squaws and braves and children were appearing on the street and coming toward the fire where the four braves faced McDermott. There were loud and excited words from

some of them, but for the most part they were profoundly puzzled—the more so after they discovered what McDermott had done.

There were questions, confusion—"The Long Knife was stronger than the white messenger?—the white messenger shall be burned in the Long Knife's place—the white messenger cut the Long Knife's thongs!"—and meanwhile McDermott stood with his back to the wilderness, his lips twisted and mean with scorn as he waited for the first move from these people whom his actions had befuddled.

Befuddled they were. For never in their lives had there been a situation like this for them to cope with. They knew how to deal with captives, murderers, and traitors. But here was a man who had willingly released a prisoner of theirs. And the man was in league with them and an enemy of the prisoner! They stood about him, watching closely, and for all the dark threats in their expressions they were wondering what to do. One of them, a stalwart, unarmed but for a tomahawk in his belt, asked sharply: "You let the Long Knife go; why?"

McDermott, standing taut, was silent for a brooding moment. Then he countered: "You would have burned the Long Knife?"

"Ai," said the stalwart, and others joined in, "we would have burned him." They waited as if to hear a revelation.

But McDermott answered with a lusty insolence: "I don't like the smell."

At that they were aghast and angered, unable to comprehend any statement so superficially flippant. But an old brave with cunning eyes and cross-hatched

skin inquired dourly: "Does the white messenger like to run the gauntlet?"

"Ai, the gauntlet!"

"Let the white messenger run the gauntlet!"

They closed in toward him, but McDermott did not yet give way. He found himself with a sense of elation judging the distance between himself and the nearest brave—how long it would take to strike and withdraw, leap back, strike and withdraw again. His hunting-knife in a strong left hand; his musket a stout club. But they were too near for him to swing his musket, they could be upon him before he raised it from the ground. It was almost with relief that he felt this physical crisis, taking him away as it did from the sickening introspection brought on by Kenton's charges.

Deep in the crowd rose an angry muttering, urging the braves in front to grapple with this defiant man. But the leading Indians were still perplexed, looking sidewise at each other as if for support. To harm the runner for the white captain beyond the lake was dangerous. It might bring the red jackets down on them from the north. But there was a push from behind. Jostled, the brave with a tomahawk was propelled toward McDermott. McDermott, seeing no gleam to kill in his opponent's eyes, stepped backward several paces quickly He halted, his shoulders against a sapling that stood where the trail from the forest debouched into the clearing of the village. "Keep away!" he warned them.

They dogged his retreating steps, closing in. And now the brave in front had his tomahawk upraised. He was so near that McDermott could see the scar on his face turning white with rage. McDermott's hunting-knife flickered out and he felt his lips stiffen as

there sounded a howl from those bobbing heads and darkly gleaming eyes.

The noise was enough to deaden the tramp of a column of warriors over the trail. They came through the forest smoothly, hurrying a little at these manifestations of violence in their village. In the lead walked a round-faced man whose black hair had been shaved until there was left only a greased forelock. He wore a richly beaded belt, an embroidered hunting-shirt, and carried a musket, knife, and tomahawk.

It was this Indian who, from behind, grasped McDermott's arm that held the unsheathed hunting-knife. McDermott wrenched free, jerked so violently that he sprawled against the sapling and spun half around to meet this new assailant. The crowd fell back, the warriors at the edge of the trail stopped, leaving a space for the two men. But as he looked McDermott lowered his weapon, slipped it back and rubbed his cheek with a shamefaced air.

The warrior was Blue Jacket, and already he had turned sternly on the crowd of Indians and was chiding them:

"So! You fight your allies! Strong men you are! Forty braves against a single man! What would you do, you braves like squaws, smother him with your petticoats?" He glared at them. "I like fighting, ai!" and he thumped his chest, "but I save my arm for my enemies!" He pointed a stubby finger toward the fire glowing behind them. "Help the squaws to make the blaze leap upward! Go!" He turned to McDermott, questioning him with his round black eyes.

Blue Jacket's eyelids fluttered. The thing which he had been told of McDermott was incomprehensible to him; it being so he did not try to understand it. After

a pause he asked: "What brings McDermott to the Shawanese country this time?"

McDermott answered: "I bring a word from the white captain beyond the lake."

Blue Jacket, standing aside for his game-laden warriors to pass on into the village, said: "I will listen. Come," and he led the way to his own tent.

When they were seated on their blankets McDermott began: "Before the Shawanese sign any treaty with the Long Knives the white captain would have Blue Jacket speak with him in the town beyond the lake."

Blue Jacket nodded. "The white captain's word is good. Blue Jacket signs no treaty with the Long Knives. When he speaks to them it is with the ball and gun. Long ago, before Cornplanter and Red Hawk went to the Great Spirit, the Long Knives drove us across the Ohio. When we went they said this was to be our hunting-ground. But now they seek to drive us farther. But Blue Jacket they will not drive. No!"

McDermott remained silent after Blue Jacket had ended. What the Shawanese war chief had said was true. That first treaty, made by Lord Dunmore years before, had given the Indians the Ohio country, and the beaten Shawanese, allowed to settle there by the Wyandots, had taken up new abodes in the land about the Scioto. And now, McDermott had heard, they were to be pushed farther northward, all of them into that small tract bounded on the north by Lake Erie, on the east by the Cuyahoga, the south by a line which ran parallel to the lake a hundred miles below, and on the west by the Miami's boundary. No matter how many treaties they signed he could not see them, the Wyandots, Delawares, and Shawanese, relinquishing all of

their land but this small portion. And he said: "It is the white captain's word that all of the Ohio country is the Indians'."

"Ai!" Blue Jacket answered. "My young men yet know how to fight."

That night they shook hands at parting and McDermott travelled northward under a winter sky. The first snow of the year fell before he had got out of the Shawanese territory. There was about an inch of level white, for the air was still; and as he continued northward among the bare trees there were more tracks of game than he could follow. But no longer did the accurate shot and the savory smell of roasting meat over his fire give him contentment. For it was with an aching keenness that he recollected what Simon Kenton had said. Until that time he had thought little about returning east of the Ohio. He had not been dissatisfied at Detroit. Colonel Elliott was a considerate man, the work was such that McDermott could do with a pride in its accomplishment, and his cabin was well built and warm. Charity never complained, and young George, well, boys were restless critters and always hankered to be some place other than where they were. But always before McDermott had felt free to go where he liked; now over the illimitable horizon a menacing barrier had been constructed; to the south and east were people who hated him. He wondered what Charity would say when he told her.

It was in a whirling snowstorm that he neared the south bank of the Maumee close by the Grand Glaize. Though still afternoon the skies were dark, and even the swiftly tumbling mass of flakes were gray and unlighted. They drove at him and the wind whipped up long, rolling billows and sent them against him stag-

geringly. He floundered on, unable to see more than a few feet in front of him. A stiffly frozen hind-quarter of deer lay over his shoulder, and his plan was to carry it across the ice to the trading-post and share it with Spence and Arrowwood in return for a night's warm lodging. But as he stumbled through the drifts he came unexpectedly upon the whitely coated skin-covering of a tent, and deciding that it would make as convenient a shelter as he could find that night, he circled it until he came to the flap, into which he loudly shouted.

"Come," answered an Indian's voice.

Stooping over, McDermott entered into an atmosphere of smoke through which the dark faces of half a dozen Indians showed hazily. They were lolling about a small fire that hissed with the continuous fall of snow that entered by the hole in the top, and as he stepped inside one of them acclaimed him:

"It is the white messenger from the captain beyond the lake."

At this identification another Indian started up and came forward to greet McDermott. Nearing him, McDermott made out the face of Mechekannequah, the Little Turtle, of the Miamis.

"We meet again," said Little Turtle.

"Ai," McDermott answered, "we meet again."

"At the same place," pursued Little Turtle.

"At the same place," repeated McDermott.

Little Turtle smiled. "Sit with us."

McDermott unslung the stiff hind-quarter and sat down on his blanket. The other Indians looked at the remnant of the deer but did not venture near it. They seemed, McDermott noted, to regard Little Turtle deferentially though he was a visitor and not strictly in his own country. For a while they sat without speak-

ing, listening to the swirls of snow lashing against the tent and to the sputter of flakes evaporating in the fire. Then Little Turtle's bright eyes glimmered through the haze of smoke toward McDermott, and he asked: "You have come from the town beyond the lake?"

He was the only Indian McDermott had ever known who talked, inquiring the why and where of things, seeming pleased with the power of communication. McDermott answered: "Two long moons ago I left the town beyond the lake. Now I come from the land of the Shawanese."

"They still fight, the Shawanese?" Little Turtle questioned interestedly.

McDermott nodded. "Blue Jacket leads his warriors."

"Wyandot and Delaware, they fight too," went on Little Turtle brightly, "they make treaty with one hand and fight with the other. Now they fight to the east where the Long Knives build their forts this side of the big river."

"Ai," grumbled an old brave whose leathery cheek glowed golden as he leaned with outstretched hands toward the fire, "and soon the Miamis fight."

"Why?" asked McDermott quickly.

The old brave looked at Little Turtle who explained: "The Long Knives build their forts in the Miami country to the south; they drive the Shawanese up into the Miami country to the north. Then the Miami warriors fight."

"Ai," affirmed the old brave, "then the Miami warriors fight."

McDermott had no doubt of it. He had not known that forts were being built on the near side of the Ohio River, but if they were supporting garrisons of troops

on the Indian banks of the Ohio he could see how it would widen the range of war.

Little Turtle spoke almost placidly, stating a simple fact: "The Long Knives want all the land. They drive Wyandots and Delawares toward the evening sun, they drive the Shawanese toward the lake. Now Delawares, and soon Shawanese, come into the Miami country—the Miamis speak no word; but when the Long Knives come the young men of the Miamis will fight. They mean to keep their land."

Thinking of the confederacy of the Seneca-Iroquois tribes, McDermott suggested: "If Shawanese, Wyandots, Delawares and Miamis fought together they might hold the Ohio country."

Little Turtle pondered for a space, then answered: "It is the truth you speak. If all of the Indians of the Ohio country joined Little Turtle he could drive the Long Knives back across the big river."

Struck by the nimble way in which Little Turtle swept together four Indian tribes and placed himself at the head of their warriors, McDermott showed his surprise. He blinked, stared, opened his mouth as if to speak, thought better of it and was still.

Noticing this, Little Turtle told him calmly: "Why shouldn't Little Turtle march at the head of all the warriors? Is he not now war-chief of the Miamis?"

McDermott looked at him queerly, then agreed: "Ai, that would be the place for the war-chief of the Miamis." He had not known of Little Turtle's rise from warrior to war-chief. He smiled through the smoke-filled air toward Little Turtle.

Meanwhile the drifts piled up outside and the wind grew shrill with the fall of night. McDermott and Little Turtle, both caught by the weather, remained in the

tent for several days, eating corn, and the venison which McDermott had brought. They talked about the Ohio country, the wars and of whether the white captain, who had often assured the Indians that the land was theirs, would help them fight the Long Knives when the battle came. McDermott believed that the white captain would.

XIV

ANOTHER winter had come and there was a great gathering in the council-house at Detroit. Under the long, low rafters stood the commandant, bright in gold braid and a red jacket, clear-eyed Little Turtle in deerskins and weaponed wampum belt indicative of his rank as war-chief of the Miamis, Colonel Elliott, bluffly serious and alert, watching Captain Pipe who was about to make an address, McDermott, tall and straight and sombre in deerskins and moccasins, the sturdy Blue Jacket, glum and watchful, yet stirred to elation under his brawny chest because he had been commissioned brigadier in the British forces. Many others stood at hand, Ottawas, Wyandots and Pottawatomies, in that close atmosphere of the council-house where they had come to celebrate a victory and to strengthen their bonds against the Long Knives.

The victory which the people in the council-house were celebrating and which was to increase the British gift of supplies to the Indians, had taken place a short time earlier in a stretch of open ground near the St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Rivers where about fifteen hundred Virginia, Pennsylvania and Kentucky militiamen and a few regulars, all under the command of General Josiah Harmar, had come to destroy the Miami towns and had been met by a combined force of braves from Shawanese, Delaware and Miami tribes under Little Turtle.

Harmar, with what remained of his fifteen hundred, was marching back to the garrison from which he had started, Fort Washington, on the north bank of

the Ohio. Unexpectedly ambushed, the militiamen had fled without firing; the regulars had made a stand but had been swept down by Little Turtle at the head of seven hundred braves among which were the savage arms of Blue Jacket, Blackhoof, Bockongahelas and Captain Pipe.

And now, while Harmar's ragged remnant reached Fort Washington where news of their defeat had preceded them, here in Detroit Captain Pipe took the floor and made his speech before the commandant. The other Indians had spoken briefly and directly, but Captain Pipe had more to say than the rest. Holding in his left hand a hickory stick from which dangled a piece of dried-up scalp of a regular killed on the battle-field, Captain Pipe began, facing the commandant; and not McDermott but the commandant's own interpreter translated as he spoke:

"Father (Hopocan calls you father though he does not know why, having known no other father than the French and considering the English only as brothers; but as this name has been imposed upon us Delawares, Hopocan shall make use of it), father, some time ago you put a war-hatchet in Hopocan's hands, saying 'Take this weapon and try it on the heads of my enemies, the Long Knives, and let me know afterward if it was sharp and good.' Father, at the time when you gave Hopocan this weapon he had neither cause nor inclination to go to war against a people who had done him no injury; yet in obedience to you who say you are his father and call him your child he received the hatchet, well knowing that if he did not obey you would withhold from him the necessaries of life, without which he could not live and which are not elsewhere to be procured but at the house of his father."

McDermott, standing between Colonel Elliott and Blue Jacket, watched him with narrowed eyes, understanding from the beginning of the speech that Captain Pipe was angling for a greater allowance of supplies, and that he was jealous because Blue Jacket had been made a brigadier while he had remained unhonored.

"Father," Captain Pipe went on, "you may think Hopocan a fool for risking his life at your bidding; in a cause, too, by which he has no prospects of gaining anything. . . ."

No prospects of gaining anything, thought McDermott in surprise. Then what about holding on to the Ohio country by the Indians to whom the commandant had publicly promised his support! Wouldn't it be a gain for the Indians if the Long Knives were driven beyond the banks of the Ohio!

" . . . for it is your cause and not Hopocan's. It is your concern to fight the Long Knives; you have raised a quarrel among yourselves and you ought to fight it out. You should not compel your children, the Indians, to expose themselves to danger for your sake." Captain Pipe paused and looked about him at the anxiously watching faces. His own expression was a thoughtful scowl.

After a moment Captain Pipe's countenance sobered and his eyes stared out clearly: "Father, many lives have already been lost on your account; tribes have suffered and have been weakened; children have lost parents!—brothers and relatives!—wives have lost husbands! It cannot be counted how many more will perish before your war will be at an end. Father, Hopocan has said that you may think him a fool for thus thoughtlessly rushing on your enemies! Do not believe this, father; think not that Hopocan wants sense to

convince him that although you now pretend to keep up an everlasting enmity to the Long Knives you may before long conclude a peace with them. Father, you say you love your children, the Indians; this you have often told them, and in very truth it is your interest to tell them that, so that they may remain in your service. But father, who of us can believe you love a people with skin a different color from your own, better than those who have a white skin like yourselves? Father, hear closely what Hopocan is about to say: While you, father, are setting the Indians on your enemies, much in the same manner that a hunter sets his dogs on the game, while the Indian is rushing on that enemy of yours with the bloody, killing weapon you gave Hopocan, he may perhaps look back to the place from which you started him and what shall he see? Perhaps he may turn back to see the father shaking hands with the Long Knives; yes, with these very people that he now calls his enemies! Hopocan may there see the white father laugh at his folly for having obeyed his orders! And yet he is now risking his life at his command! Father, keep what Hopocan has said in remembrance."

There was a vigorous shake of the commandant's head and he opened his mouth as if to speak and deny, but etiquette kept him silent until Hopocan had ended. Both Little Turtle and Blue Jacket were frowning at Captain Pipe, McDermott noticed. To McDermott himself such treachery as Captain Pipe suspected seemed impossible. For the white captain had promised the Indians to help hold the Ohio country. It was to remain the land of the Indians. The commandant, Colonel Elliott and other British officers had said so many times.

With lifted chin, Captain Pipe looked sharply about the council-house, then continued, "Now, father, here is what has been done with the hatchet you gave Hopocan," and quietly he stepped forward and held out the stick with the dangling scalp to the commandant.

The commandant looked down at the token uneasily. It was not at all what he had given Captain Pipe; the present had been a steel bright hatchet, not this peeled hickory stick to which was appended a dried, hairy piece of skin. He looked at the object, then hopelessly toward Colonel Elliott, then at the interpreter and finally at Captain Pipe. His cheeks and neck flushed as he held out his hand.

Imperturbably, Captain Pipe resumed, the interpreter repeating his words as they fell almost: "Hopocan has done with the hatchet what you ordered him to do, and found it sharp. But he did not do all that he might have done. No, he did not. His heart failed within him and he felt compassion for your enemy. Helpless women and children—the innocent ones—have no part in your quarrel, therefore he distinguished—he spared."

Yes, thought McDermott, he spared. He was the man, so Little Turtle had said, who had boasted that he had used his tomahawk upon the skulls of the Long Knives until his arm could no longer be lifted. He was the man who had seen Crawford put to death. And now he was talking about mercy, trying to get from under the charge of extreme savagery toward prisoners, which the British did not allow.

"Ai, father, Hopocan spared! Often since you placed that weapon in his hand he has made some of the white families captive instead of killing them. But with

Hopocan these white skins grow hungry. You, father, have the means of preserving that which with Hopocan would perish for want. The warrior is poor and his cabin is always empty; but your house, father, is always full."

At last the speech had come to an end and Hopocan sat down on his colored blanket beside Bockongahelas who leaned with folded arms against the unplastered wall. Now the commandant, holding the odious stick rigidly away from him, signalled to the interpreter and made his fourth official answer for that wintry afternoon. He was out of patience, but though he spoke crisply and briefly he used the words that all the Indians wanted to hear:

"My children" (the interpreter echoed, "the white father speaks, 'my children' ") "I have heard you all as I have heard Chief Hopocan and your voices are good to my ears. But it is not as Chief Hopocan says; you are not fighting the white father's quarrel against the Long Knives. The white father's quarrel with the Long Knives is over. He has retired to his land and they to theirs. But let the Long Knives remain in their land. Let them not come into the Ohio country which belongs to the Indians! The white father does protect the Indians, his children. He gives them flour and meal and beef, shot and gunpowder and cloth from his stores. The white father helps the Indians to keep their hunting-ground. Let the Long Knives keep beyond the Ohio and the white father and his children will dwell in peace; but let the Long Knives come into the Ohio country to burn the Indians' villages and the white father will send his warriors with the Indians to drive them out."

There were sounds of approval on the comman-

dant's address. Blue Jacket and Little Turtle smiled at the white father, but glanced at Captain Pipe with anger. He was cunning and a braggart, what did his suspicions amount to? Nothing, their attitudes seemed to say as they turned away from him. To McDermott as well as to the others Captain Pipe's suspicions caused no uneasiness. And if they had the words of the commandant would have quickly brought back their confidence in the sunny destiny of the Indians in the Ohio country. What if the Long Knives did have forts on the north bank of the big river, what if they did call the land their own and have a governor in charge of the territory; had not the Indians scattered the army of Harmar, the commander-in-chief in the northwest, and driven him back to his starting point! All of them save Captain Pipe were well content that day and this one grumbling man had a sore paw only because he was greedier and had not been treated so well as Blue Jacket, Little Turtle and the rest.

The meeting ended. The Indians, carrying their blankets, muskets and presents, filed silently out the door. The commandant, his own interpreter, and Colonel Elliott, remained to talk. McDermott left the council-house by himself, treading over the hard ground which was covered by a thin layer of snow, in the direction of his cabin.

Charity smilingly greeted him as he entered. She was alone and he said: "Where's the boy?"

Charity sat down. "Picked up his musket and took himself off—alone, like he always does. To see that boy behave you'd think there's more company in a dog than there is in a human mortal."

"He don't take much to people, that's the truth," her husband said. "Reckon that's my half ashowin' in

him." He stretched his deerskin-covered legs out toward the blazing logs and rubbed them gently.

She surveyed him with critical brown eyes. "Sho'," Charity asserted, "you'd be right sociable if you ever took it on yourself to stay in one place a spell. Trampin' the country year in an' year out, it's enough to wear your legs off right up to the knee-joints, I'll declare." Then she paused, inquiring: "No end to all this vyagin' in sight?"

He answered: "Hain't heered of none. But 'twon't be so far I'll have to go any more. They're agatherin' around the Grand Glaize now."

"Who?"

"All the Indians. Shawanese up from the south, Wyandots an' Delawares in from the west. Hain't more'n four days afoot from here. A mare could travel it in two if they was fair weather. Right bright country, too. Why I've seen fish jump up from the Maumee long as your forearm an' thicker'n your thigh."

"Why they all agatherin' up there?"

"Chased up there by the Long Knives; want to drive 'em clean outen their country, won't draw a peaceful breath till they do."

"Long Knives!" she exclaimed, "you talk like a savage."

"Don't know what else to call 'em," he confessed. "They're white folks, but seems like they're from everywhere under the sun." He hadn't told her about Simon Kenton.

"'Spect they's Kerliny folks mixed up with 'em then," said Charity. "They're right smart at quarrelin'." Her voice was warm with wistful affection as she spoke of the people of the Carolinas.

He was silent, staring at the ruddy logs. The fact

that Harmar, with more than a thousand men from the border States, had cut his way up into the Indian country and attacked gave him a heavy uneasiness. There was bound, he was beginning to see, to be a day of reckoning in the Ohio country. These raids and bush-whackings and expeditions must some time end. The forests to the east and south of the Ohio were being cleared, and individuals were making claims of great tracts of land—enough to spur the newer settlers farther westward, where there was virgin territory free to be fought for with axe as well as with musket. And the Ohio country, not only rich in itself, stretched out as a barrier in the direct path to this new land beyond. Though sensing none of the causes McDermott was becoming aware that this land of the Delawares, Wyandots, Shawanese and Miamis was being invaded with an earnestness of purpose far greater than vengeance of white man to Indian.

And the people who were coming considered him an enemy of theirs. Perhaps he had been. He did not know. At any rate it had not been conscious in him until after his meeting with Simon Kenton. What Kenton had said hurt, and continued to hurt. It went deep and wide, like an all-pervading poison. And by it he was set apart, feeling isolation everywhere except among the Indians. For he had no intimates among the Canadians and British at Detroit and at the settlement of Malden across the river. And in his own family he was shut out because he had kept what Kenton had told him a secret from Charity. Their relation, though not altered in its ordinary course, did not now permit of sympathy or counsel from Charity, since she had no knowledge of the trouble. Moreover, there was young George, soon in his fifteenth year and making friends

with nobody, a tall, straight, sober-eyed youth who went his own way from morning till night.

That situation remained throughout the dreary winter. Under its covering of snow the garrisoned village of Detroit went on about its fur trading. Except for brief journeys now and again McDermott worked with Colonel Elliott in the fort. Young George and his spotted hound hunted game; and the pelts were salted down to be sold. The news that came from the Ohio country was not then unusual: more bushwhacking by the Shawanese and Delawares, horse stealing and burning; more handfuls of frontiersmen crossing the Ohio in small parties bent on vengeance. It lasted through the blooming months of spring and into a hot, dry summer.

Then one day in late July a Shawanese runner from Blue Jacket's band came riding into the main gate on a lathered stallion, stopping neither for sentry nor corporal until he had reached the door of Colonel Elliott's quarters. It was there that McDermott found him, having been sent for directly.

The Shawanese, in a gloomy fury at being unable to make himself understood, had turned away from Colonel Elliott and was stalking softly up and down the floor, but seeing McDermott he stopped and held out his hands: "White brother! I come to you with bad news, very bad news."

"Bad news!" with hard cheerfulness McDermott echoed to Colonel Elliott.

"The devil!" said the colonel, "they've always a barrel of that on hand with the bung half started."

"Bad news," said the Shawanese; "many Long Knives gather by the big river to attack the Indians."

As McDermott repeated this information Colonel

Elliott's interest quickened and he became the questioner. "They are, eh? Well, where are they gathering?"

Discovering this answer from the alert Shawanese, McDermott repeated: "At the fort where the governor lives, on the Ohio close by the Miami's mouth."

"Fort Washington," said Colonel Elliott to himself. "Does General Harmar lead again—you know, the man they whipped last year?"

The three-cornered colloquy continued:

"General Harmar has gone away."

"Who is to lead against the Indians?"

"Blue Jacket does not know."

"When are they expected?"

"Blue Jacket does not know."

"Soon?"

"Blue Jacket does not know."

"Well" (to McDermott), "there's no need for haste. No army can come up through that wilderness in a few days." To McDermott to translate: "How many are they?"

"Very many. As many as last time."

"Fifteen hundred, eh? And he don't know who commands?"

"He says he thinks the governor who was a general in the big war."

"Ah, that's St. Clair, a gouty old rip, I've heard. Well, well. Tell him we'll have shot and provender for all of 'em below the Glaize in plenty of time."

McDermott translated this assurance, and after a while the messenger from Blue Jacket went out.

Left alone with McDermott, Colonel Elliott took out his pipe and filled it. Holding a taper over the bowl he said, "McDermott," puff, "McDermott," puff, "you

recollect the talk you told me you had with Little Turtle about the tribes," puff, puff, "confederating in the Ohio country?"

"I remember," McDermott nodded. "But it didn't amaze Little Turtle none. 'Twas in a tent by the Maumee near the Glaize, where we'd got fast by a blizzard an' he up with, 'an' Little Turtle'll walk in front.' " He laughed.

"I *wonder couldn't we make something out* o' that," said Colonel Elliott thoughtfully.

"Out of what?"

"There'd be several thousand warriors if the tribes banded, perhaps the Ottawas and Kickapoos along with the Ohio Indians."

"What'ld *they* come in fur?"

Colonel Elliott hunched up his shoulders and took the bowl of his pipe in both hands. "What does any one do anything for?" His brows were quizzical.

McDermott didn't know.

"Zookers!" exclaimed Colonel Elliott, and inspected another facet of the subject. "They're slow and lazy, those Ohio Indians. Keep their cabins full and they'd be satisfied never to lift their hands. But a good man with 'em from day to day might keep their minds stirred up over joining together till they formed a good, sound confederacy that'ld hold the frontiersmen at a distance."

"So they might," agreed McDermott; "it's in their heads right enough. Little Turtle an' Blue Jacket'ld give their 'aye' to't; like as not Tarhe an' Captain Pipe could be persuaded."

"You think you could do it?"

"Me?"

"No other." Colonel Elliott contemplated McDer-

mott over the bowl of his pipe. "You know 'em better than any man in the garrison."

"I reckon I know 'em clost enough, but I cain't warrant they'd hearken to what I'd say on't."

"You'd have our help for the job, you know, McDermott." Colonel Elliott relighted his pipe. "It would take," he said, "it would take a man to live amongst them, say down around the Glaize—a good, accessible place for supplies, ain't it?"

"A straight waterway from here," said McDermott. Moreover, the Glaize was now almost the central point of the four tribes, the Shawanese having been driven northward, or rather having fled northward to make the distance between themselves and Fort Washington greater; the Wyandots and Delawares having come from the east after the treaty of 1786. It had been and still was the eastern extremity of the Miami territory, and Kekinoggay, the Miami capital, was less than fifty miles away. It was the place in which to stir the Indians to concerted action, of that McDermott was aware. But whether he was the man for it he did not know. He was conscious, however, of an urge to try, to find a place for himself among these Indians. He had an understanding of them, a sense that they were not so far removed from his own forbears, even though of these he knew actually nothing. They all carried themselves as free men, fought for each other's rights, and their sachems and chiefs claimed no superiority over the rank and file as persons. The family ruled, and each member in it had an equal right. He liked them for this personal dignity, which was an attribute of their simple government. He liked the chieftains, not one and all, but Blue Jacket, who had courage and yet no fanatical temper; Little Turtle, a man of McDer-

mott's own age, but brighter and more inquiring, a full-hearted, swiftly flying warrior. And the feeling came to him that with these people who returned his respect he might find a perennial safety from the life of cross-purposes and unsocial endeavors of men of his own coloring. The Indians fought for tangible benefits in which each of them could share. There were no feuds within the families, and no wars between the different families that made up the tribe. The lines which drew them into conflict were hard-drawn and clearly distinguished, not like the wavering scrawl which had marked rebel and loyalist so arbitrarily that a man might go through the war without knowing why he was the one or the other. . . . Besides, the Ohio country was the Indians' land, and theirs was the right to it. And McDermott, carefully resolving, said: "I'll go, colonel; I'll do't."

Colonel Elliott tapped out the dead ash in his pipe bowl. "Very well. You can impress on 'em that they must confederate if they're to hold the Ohio country —as for us, we'll do our endeavor to help 'em."

They talked a few moments longer. Colonel Elliott said he would see the commandant of the garrison, and it would be arranged for McDermott to set out soon for the neighborhood of the Grand Glaize and the Maumee. It was not known when the governor of the northwest, General St. Clair, who was now commander of the regulars at Fort Washington, would begin his march northward, but the colonel had no doubt that Blue Jacket's scouts would discover his movements within a day after his departure, and would bring the news long in advance of the attacking troops.

McDermott walked slowly and thoughtfully along the dusty, rutted road, disturbed by the realization

that once he went down into the Ohio country among the Indians he would see Charity and young George less frequently than ever before. He had not considered while talking to Colonel Elliott that he and Charity might be separated, but now that the possibility did come to his mind he felt less pleasure in the prospect of living at the Grand Glaize.

Young George was in the house; he knew that when he came into sight of the cabin, for the spotted hound was lying in the sun as guardian of the threshold. The hound's mournful eyes blinked up and his tail thudded, sending up puffs of dust as McDermott entered. Young George, bareheaded, wearing moccasins, leather breeches and a cloth shirt, held forth from a stool by the hearth:

"A man cain't do't; he cain't."—At fifteen he was calling himself a man.—"Why, if I had a right good stretch of ground I could raise a heap o' crops; last all winter an' to spare. But on a skimpy patch like this, well, 'tain't worth the foolin', an' there's an end on't."

McDermott stepped inside. George had hold of his hoe and was shaking the end of it as he spoke to Charity, who sat listening and stirring up dough in a bowl. It was his favorite subject that summer: the trifling size of their plot of ground behind the cabin, and it was his desire that his father buy a piece of land across the river at Malden, where farming was being carried on. And even as McDermott heard his son speaking the picture of the thickly wooded Ohio country about the Grand Glaize came to him, no clearing anywhere about, and he wondered what young George would say when he told him where he was going.

"That's right," said McDermott as his son came to a

period. He spoke genially. "If it was left to you you'd have half creation spaded up an' planted in a garden."

Young George grinned, acknowledging himself as the butt of a joke, but far from overcome by it. "Oh," he said, "I ain't that big a fool." He looked at his father, questioning him for what news there might be.

Charity, still swishing the flour paste in the bowl on her lap, also looked.

"Well," said McDermott, and sat down on the third stool. It was between the table and the hearth, where the back log smoldered, making the cabin hot. "I'll be avyagin' directly now."

Young George held the hoe handle motionless. "Where to?"

"Hain't fur," said his father, "down around the Grand Glaize; but I'll be a long spell gone." He looked undecidedly at Charity.

Charity's round brown eyes were anxious. "Longer'n you're wont to be?"

"Reckon so," admitted McDermott after a time. The words which would inform her that his work in the Ohio country was most likely to last for months were not to be spoken easily. It was as though they were rough and dry; they stuck in his throat. "Can't tell how long—like as not through the winter."

"What on earth for?" Charity's voice was shrill with apprehension, and young George stared glumly at his father.

"Colonel wants me," he answered. "He claims if I'm down there to stir 'em up the Indians might dovetail into a confederacy, like what the tribes o' the Senecas an' Iroquois got to hold themselves together."

In the same tone as before Charity asked: "Why on

earth does he want that; and why don't he do it hisself?"

McDermott laced his fingers about his knee. "He cain't talk the Indian talk nohow. But that hain't all. He wants a body down there to handle things, provender an' sichlike that he sends down to the Indians, Shawanese an' Miamis, mostly."

Charity stared blankly: "Why that could go on for years! Sounds to me like we'd have to live down there! Right in the wilderness, law!"

"No," McDermott shook his head emphatically; "couldn't live there. 'Twouldn't be safe for you an' the boy, not nohow."

"Safe!" young George's temper flared; he wasn't to be put in a class with women and children, not if he could help it. "You talk like that's all a mortal had to fuss about. I ain't hankerin' to be safe."

Angus chuckled sardonically and appealed to his wife: "You hear that boy talk?" Inwardly he was pleased at the way both Charity and George had taken for granted that they too were to go into the wilderness; but of course it was impossible for them to go with him. There was the chance—not a big one, to be sure—but a chance that General St. Clair's army would break through the Indian resistance and storm the country. But that was not his main objection. His reason for wanting them to remain in Detroit was because Charity had already gone through sufficient hardships and dangers to last the rest of her life; it was rightful that she should now stay in Detroit, where there was a snug cabin and no danger of famine.

Young George flushed. "You go an' we'll traipse after you. Won't we?" he appealed to his mother.

Charity smiled dolefully. "We'll do what yore pappy says."

But George doggedly continued: "Why, he wouldn't keep us here when he wa'n't to be here hisself. He's jist atalkin' to hear hisself!"

Thinking to dissuade him by making the country about the Grand Glaize less attractive than it really was, and by reminding him that in the wilderness there was no cleared ground for planting and cultivating, his father said: "Go down there an' you'd have to drop yore cawn in the bottom-lands, jist like the Indians—you complain about no garden space up here, but if you follered me there'd be none at all."

But young George was not to be put aside. "Reckon I've got a axe that'll chop a heap o' trees."

"No two ways about that," admitted his father. Somehow young George was getting the better of him; and somehow he was not so sorry as he believed he should have been. "But they's more to clearin' land than choppin' trees; I reckon yore mammy'll tell if that hain't truth."

"Sho'," scoffed George, "grampappy had a right good clearin' in his time; I hearn her tell it to me. An' if it hadn't been for them varminty Shawanese he'd a' made suthing of it." He looked defiantly at his father.

Angus turned to Charity for help. But it was not forthcoming.

"It's what he's been hankerin' to do," said Charity.

Observing that his mother was giving aid in deepening the wedge in the argument George added: "I'd like it a heap better'n here."

"No," Charity asseverated softly, "he ain't never liked it here."

"Thunderation!" exclaimed McDermott. George's solitary manner was familiar to him, but explained in so many words it seemed surprising. "Why hain't I

been hearin' on that head afore? An' how come these folks don't suit?"

Charity explained vaguely: "It's jist the boy's way, Angus. Somehow he ain't never took to 'em very heartylike."

Sitting there on his stool in the cabin it occurred to McDermott that perhaps there was a good deal in the minds of his wife and son that he knew nothing about. He had been away so much of the time, concerned only that they were safe and had money enough for their needs. But he had given little attention to what they thought about and felt. And whether it was the heat of the day augmented by the fire from the grate, or this sudden awareness of his neglect—whatever the cause he felt cold sweat on his forehead. He scanned young George closely, a lean youth taller than himself, eyes like his mother's, a square jaw and a mouth that, though it was a little loose and uncertain now, would some day be firm with determination. He breathed, it was a kind of sigh, and said: "Well, you an' yore mammy aim to go along, do you? But what if we hain't there only till after the old year's out—what if the colonel calls me back when next year's thaw begins, then what? Be labor lost, I reckon?"

"Why," young George grinned with bashful delight and answered, "then we'll leave it. A cabin ain't no task to build; an' maybe," he went on hopefully, "we'll be handy enough at farmin' an' trappin' pelts we kin stay sot, an' you won't need to go arunnin' when the colonel calls."

Uneasily McDermott passed his hand across his forehead. "You uphold the boy in talk like this?" he asked of Charity.

She scolded gently, "Hush, George," and looked

earnestly at her husband, "I don't hanker to be separated from you any more'n he does."

Angus glanced away, knowing he would yield and act directly against what his sense informed him should be done. He ought to tell them flatly that they must remain in Detroit, that George must get along as best he could until he grew more fond of these people among whom he had grown up; *that the country* about the Grand Glaize was only four days distance, and that he could come home from there frequently. But instead he said: "Looks like we'd best be hewin' out a pirogue fur ourselves if we aim to have anything to cook with or sleep on when we git there."

Young George was silent for a moment. Then he said, as though his faith in his father had been at low ebb but was now at high tide: "I knowed you'd see it thataway. Why, we'll be as cosey down there . . ."

"Cain't be what you'd call right cosey amongst a pack of Indians," his father warned him.

But at that time young George was not mindful of the Indians. And even Charity was moved to say, though she had long detested them as brawling, senseless savages: "They're varmints, but it ain't so bad if a body don't have to watch 'em eat."

XV

IN the pirogue, which was a great log that had been hollowed out by an adze, squared at the stern and bluntly pointed in the bow, were Angus, Charity, and young George. At the front of the bunglesome craft the youth stood with pole and oar; Charity sat in the middle on a bundle of quilts and a feather-bed, and her husband at the farther end held a guiding oar as the boat was carried down stream on the Detroit River toward Lake Erie. Piled up in the adze-hewn bottom were their belongings: two fat black iron kettles and one of copper, a gunny-sack of seeds and roots, wooden dishes and wooden spoons, a bucket, the shell of a gourd for a dipper, an earthenware platter, three muskets, a box of shot and another of powder, two axes, an adze, hoe, spade, and that was about all excepting the disjointed bedstead, which leaned awkwardly against the side between Charity and George, and the spotted hound crouching near the bow.

The month was September, but an early frost had turned the leaves on tree and undergrowth into a brilliant, running flame. And as the pirogue went along in this canyon of ochre and scarlet, russet and green, more leaves dropped down in unsteady spirals, settling on the quiet, shaded water. From either side came the chip-chip-chip of brown-plumed squirrels disturbed in their task beneath the hickorys and the sudden flash of a cotton-tail warned of human approach and skitting from hummock to the butts of fallen trees.

Fall weather was in the air, one more season now until the chill, bare winter which the threatening caw

of a hawk, flying low beneath the gray-blue sky, seemed to proclaim. And Charity, sitting erect on the mound of quilts, thought of the cabin in the wilderness to which they were going and which she had never seen. She said: "I hope there ain't too many cracks in the logs."

She spoke to her husband, but it was young George that answered: "We chinked 'em all up. It's right solid now. I squinted along it from top to bottom, an' couldn't see ary a crack."

George and his father had been down at the Grand Glaize throughout August, felling trees for the one-room log cabin in which they were to live. There had not been time for them to square the logs; they had left them rounded and had piled one on top of the other, flattening only the ends, which they had notched where each joined the other. But the cabin stood, and though the floor was earthen the logs of the roof and sides had been carefully calked, and a banking of dirt had been built up against the base at the north and west. An outside chimney, with a hearth wide enough to burn a four-foot log, squatted heavily at the end of the cabin, but barely rose above the roof. At most the cabin was a shelter from the coldest weather and the storms, but George was proud of it because his own hands had helped with the construction.

"Cabin's solid enough," said Angus. He spoke dryly, thinking not of the new dwelling, but of the army which St. Clair was recruiting at Fort Washington, less than two hundred miles directly south of the Grand Glaize. During the two months that had passed since the Shawanese runner had come to Detroit with the message that the American governor of the northwest territory was making ready to attack the Indians no

more news of St. Clair's movements had been reported. That he was still at Fort Washington was likely, but McDermott had seen no runner for more than a week, and much could have happened within that time.

"Have a planked floor mebbe afore winter, pap says," George called back from the bow. "But it's powerful hard work evenin' a log with only a axe an' a adze."

Charity turned and smiled: "I reckon we'll be plenty snug afore long."

The boat kept on its cumbersome way, propelled a little more swiftly than the current. McDermott's gaze lay ahead, watchful of the irregular river bank along which he was being borne toward Lake Erie. It was slow travelling, his progress in the pirogue being scarcely greater than if he had been walking. And after they reached Lake Erie it would be still more halting, for they would have to skirt the edge of the rough and shallow waters and, on reaching the Maumee, pole their way up-stream.

Yet everything considered he could not help feeling a kind of contentment. For the day was bright, he had his family, and they were journeying to a place where he hoped they would remain together and secure. He had a definite job to do, two jobs rather. The purpose of one was to effect consolidation of the Indian tribes and the other was to see that Shawanese and Delawares, Wyandots and Miamis in the neighborhood of the Grand Glaize each received their share of the rations which Colonel Elliott had promised would be sent to them twice a year.

They journeyed on. Night came and they moored the pirogue. George filled two kettles from the river and set them above the fire which his father had built; Charity prepared the meal. It was, as George remarked

when they lay wrapped in their quilts and blankets: "Jist like we was to home."

The next day brought them to Lake Erie, where, till after sunset, they forged the prow of the rolling hulk into the endless waves. Water sprayed over the sides, wetting Charity and the bedclothes; the pirogue tossed like the log it was, the household goods shifted from side to side, the dog howled mournfully, and George, drawing hard on his oar, grew sick and trembling from the constant rolling. To his right he could see the waves breaking in a white froth on the shore, running up the beach nearly to the foot of the trees. To his left and ahead was nothing but blue peaks dancing dizzily. But that night they tied the pirogue to a willow in Maumee Bay. Drying out a blanket by the fire Charity sighed: "If we go to Detroit agin I hope 'twill be afoot."

George looked up to answer: "Won't never go there nohow."

Maumee Bay was a widening of the river between the rapids and the lake. An Indian family of Delawares that helped the heavily laden pirogue through the shallow, swift, and rocky stretch to a point where the water ran calmly between green banks again. But the rapids were long and the Indians lackadaisical; the travellers and their goods were wet and the sun was descending when at last they reached the slow, untroubled surface above the rapids.

About forty miles lay between them and their new home, a distance that they lessened considerably before darkness. And on the day following, the pirogue loaded with a quartered deer and a brace of turkeys, in which the pup, holding his head to one side and looking pathetic, tried valiantly to master his interest, they rowed

onward past the Indian villages, which thickened mile by mile, until at length they came to the site on which they had built their cabin.

"There 'tis," called young George, and pointed the handle of his oar toward a clearing in the woodland half way up the gently sloping right bank.

Charity looked.

A hundred yards up the slope from the river showed a swath of white-topped stumps and cleared underbrush; and beyond it, between the edge of the clearing and the extending forest stood a one-room cabin, with doorway and window facing toward the south, and a thick chimney hunched at the west end. Around the cabin lay the forest, and down from among the standing trees near the west side of the cabin trickled a stream of clear water through a gulley lined with willows.

"Law!" exclaimed Charity as she stood up in the bottom of the pirogue, "law! did my boy help make that!" She looked brightly at George.

George stepped to the grassy ground and made the bow fast to a red-gold sapling. " 'Twan't much to do," he answered modestly.

Pushed by a pole the stern sidled up to the landing and was tied by Angus. Charity jumped over the side. " 'Twas a heap," she said jubilantly; "why that's a right snug little cabin!"

Angus bent over, taking up the bedclothes. "Hain't so snug 'thout a door," he said.

"Law," said Charity, "no door! My land!"

"But they will be," replied young George defensively, "if pappy brung the hinges."

"They're in the bottom of the pirogue," his father assured him.

Charity sighed with relief. "Be a better cabin with a door," she confessed.

Their arms filled with the goods they brought, they walked up among the stumps through the clearing to the cabin and stood before the open threshold. It was already dark inside, the round, glowing sun at their left being now low over the distant tree-tops.

Angus entered and placed the things he carried on the dirt floor. Outside again, he said: "Come now, George; we'll haul up the bedstead."

Charity, left standing there, called after them as they went down toward the boat: "Don't forget the bilin' kettles! Else there'll be a late supper."

"They're in the cabin," Angus shouted over his shoulder.

Thus in so short a time after their arrival did the cabin in the wilderness become their home. For with the bedstead raised and standing in a corner, the hearth alight with burning logs and the kettle bubbling over the flame it was all they needed for their comfort. As Charity said that night: "There's good clear water right at hand, a good roof over our heads and wood enough to burn till the day of doom."

"An' fish an' game enough to feed a regiment," said Angus.

But it was the wilderness nevertheless. And it suffered by comparison to the stockade at Detroit where most of the cabins had planked floors and where there was a store at which general merchandise could be bought. Here their nearest white neighbors were four miles away, along the Maumee bank westward across from the point of land which stretched into the mingling waters of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers. And these two men, as McDermott believed, were no more

reliable nor helpful than they should have been. As for Indians, there were those aplenty. Their tents and their fields of corn and vegetables in the bottom-lands could be seen for miles.

In the darkness young George lay on a sack filled with leaves, a blanket covering him, and listened to the dismal hoot of the owls from the surrounding forest. He supposed he would get used to it in time, but on that first night the sound made a doleful welcoming. "Hoo-hoo-who're you?" the long, trembling question would sound at intervals through the trees and young George, playing a valiant game with himself, a kind of dreaming-awake in which he conquered the wilderness and rose to be a great man, would mutter voicelessly: "Damn yore feathers, I'll show you who I am!" The moonlight, too, seemed strange. The pale, shining disc was high in the east and a long shaft from it, like a mysterious feeler of some unearthly thing, entered the cabin window and lay aslant the dirt floor.

But after that first night the surroundings became more familiar. With his musket primed, young George tramped through the country, finding berries in the underbrush and game in the thicket. He came to know the lay of the land, where the rolling ground was high and where it was low. Here was a grove of maples not yet tapped by the Indians—what a sugar bush it would make one of those days, he thought, and how good the syrup would be on gridiron cakes; and there was a stand of walnuts, the sturdy, antlered branches holding the meaty nuts. And in the heart of the woods a mile or more north of the cabin was a natural meadow-land of several acres. It ought to be made to yield something—he did not then quite know what, but the

hummocks of grass and the bushes would not be difficult to clear. Farmers at Malden were making good use of the ground and he saw nothing to hinder him from doing as well as they.

Under Charity's guiding hand the cabin became more livable. The pile of logs and faggots near the threshold had always to be kept replenished and she required her son and husband to bring in more game than was needed for the day on which it was shot. Day and night the log fire burned; by October a door was fashioned and with grave pride George swung it to and fro on its hinges. "Right heavy," he said, "an' it fits plumb on the sill." The coming winter, he thought, might not be so unpleasant after all, not with a snug cabin well supplied with flour and salt and meal, several bushels of nuts and a forest abounding with game.

George hunted and worked about the cabin by himself during those October days. For his father was going more and more among the Indians, journeying to the village of Blue Jacket's family which had removed from the land about the Scioto to a village on the banks of the Auglaize a few miles west of the point, travelling eastward to the home of Tarhe the Crane, chief of the Wyandots, then farther westward to Kekinoggay where the council-fires of the Miamis burned and near which Little Turtle lived in a village on the Eel River. But George had "The Pup," still so called though it was a full-grown hound, and the pup had a sharp nose for deer and coons and with him George brought down a number of both species of game.

One evening when his father was at home a call was made by Spence and Arrowwood, the two men from the trading-post at the point. They teetered awkwardly on their stools and darkened the cabin with their to-

bacco smoke, looking uneasily from George and Charity to Angus. Evidently they had something to say to his father, and George was anxious to know its import. But at length Arrowwood, taking his pipe out of his mouth and ruminatively rubbing the palm of his hand against the leg of his leather breeches, said haltingly: "Like to parley with you a bit, McDermott, if you'll step outside with me and Spence."

McDermott nodded and arose without speaking. Opening the door for the two Canadian trappers, he stood aside for them to pass, then followed them into the moonlight in which the river and the stump-studded slope showed brightly.

In the chill air Spence and Arrowwood looked hesitantly at each other:

"You tell him, Arrowwood."

"No, you got it straighter than me. Loose your tongue."

McDermott hastened them. "Right sharp astandin' here bareheaded. Speak your minds."

Arrowwood began: "Been hearin' about an army marching in this direction, we have." He eyed McDermott with a bird-like quickness.

"Folks air allus hearin' 'bout armies nowadays," McDermott answered.

"You say 'tain't so?" Arrowwood asked quickly.

"I say nothin'," McDermott answered shortly, "You're havin' yore say now."

"That we are," said Spence. "What we want to know is, is there a army headed for the Grand Glaize?"

"What if there is?" asked McDermott. The Indians, he knew from his visits among them, were alert and ready to meet whatever army there was to come,

though the confederation of the tribes still remained uncertain.

"If there is," said Arrowwood decidedly, "we want to know in time to move up north where we come from."

"Do you now?" asked McDermott. He had been working toward the consolidation of the Indians, thinking of strengthening the Ohio country until it should be impregnable from the south and thus remain in the hands of the tribes that inhabited it. This was his job; it was not an easy one, though with the promised support of the soldiers at Detroit it could be accomplished. But he was subtly irritated by Spence and Arrowwood showing such alarm at the threatened invasion—more than threatened now, for he had heard from a Shawanese runner at Blue Jacket's tent that about fifteen hundred of the Long Knives were moving northward.

"We ask you, man to man," Spence told him earnestly.

McDermott thought, "Puny little rascal." But he answered: "Reckon they might be some o' that. They got a army, right enough; an' it's amovin' thisaway. But 'twon't git this fur, not nohow."

There was a silence and the two trappers tried to read each other's faces in the moonlight. "Well," said Spence, "they won't find us if they do come."

"You men bent on vyagin'?" McDermott asked them. "Don't look like good faith, you men skinnin' out when they's a sign of danger."

"Faith to what?" inquired Arrowwood.

"To them folks up in Detroit where you come from," replied McDermott. "They aim the Indians should stay in the Ohio country."

Arrowwood answered: "'Tain't no difference who owns a country to a man that's stretched out cold. Ged!" He turned away and Spence followed. But before they reached the river bank Arrowwood stopped and called back:

"You like to trade for that boat of yours?"

"Sho'," said McDermott, "what'll you give?"

He could hear the two men conversing in low voices.

"Sack o' salt and a buffalo robe," Arrowwood offered.

"They might be handy," acknowledged McDermott. Salt was always difficult to get and as for the buffalo robe it would increase the comfort of the cabin when the weather sharpened. Besides, the trade would afford an excuse to Charity for the long parley; there was no need to excite her with a statement of what they actually had talked about. He said: "You kin drop 'em on my side of the bank when you go past."

So that was the last of Spence and Arrowwood for a while, he thought as he returned to the cabin. They would be back, but not till after the fighting was over.

Inside the door Charity looked up at him from the firelight. "Now what did they want at this time o' night?"

"Oh," said her husband, "they had a hankerin' for the pirogue—I took a bag o' salt an' a buffalo robe in trade." He chuckled to himself.

The exchange, he thought, was fair enough. Evidently those two men were taking everything they had away with them—were also in a hurry to leave, for he discovered the next morning that they had already passed down the river and had left the articles where the pirogue had been moored. And calling to George to take them in the cabin, McDermott disappeared into the westward trail, following the river for several miles toward Blue Jacket's village.

The path led past a disconnected string of Indian tents and McDermott was joined by a number of braves before he had gone beyond the deserted cabin of Spence and Arrowwood and had followed the bank of the Auglaize in its northwesterly windings. They greeted him with upraised hands; he noticed that their quivers were full, their bows were slung and many had muskets and pouches of powder and shot. And walking along, McDermott asked one of them who strode silently behind him: "The Long Knives are coming?"

The Indian answered briefly: "The Long Knives are coming. A runner came to Blue Jacket and woke him from his sleep."

McDermott went quickly forward.

Blue Jacket squatted on his mat before his tent, testing the size of lead balls and making them fit his musket barrel. He looked up as McDermott stepped from the trail into the clearing.

They exchanged greetings and McDermott asked: "You are going to the south?"

"Soon I lead my warriors."

"Do the Long Knives remain in the new fort they built?"

Blue Jacket continued fitting the musket-balls. "They have built another fort—closer. They march for the Mackachak towns."

The Mackachak towns were about a hundred miles south of the Grand Glaize, on the Miami River, while the Long Knives' recently constructed stockade was still farther in the direction of Fort Washington on the Ohio where they had started from. The Mackachak towns had been deserted and burned by their inhabitants who had come northward. That meant that St. Clair's army would be drawn more deeply into

the wilderness of the Ohio country. Tarhe the Crane, of the Wyandots, Captain Pipe and Bockongahelas of the Delawares and Little Turtle of the Miamis were leading their braves to a point of meeting on the Maumee some miles south of the Grand Glaize. And now Blue Jacket was gathering his warriors, Blackhoof was to join him with the rest of the Shawanese and they were all to move southward under command of Little Turtle.

As McDermott stood beside Blue Jacket more Indians appeared from the forest, armed like the others. Some, in preparation for the expected battle, had even now painted their faces with the stains of roots and berries; red and yellow, black and brown, full colors and streaked designs by which their mouths seemed split and their eyes wild and crafty. No squaws or children arrived. This was the braves' affair and all except the warriors were left behind.

Soon all the fighting men had assembled. Without dancing or shouting, they filed down to the river bank and crossed over to the other side on their way to battle.

There was no dancing or shouting then, but on the night that followed when McDermott stood with the warriors of the four tribes who had gathered on the Maumee banks south of the Grand Glaize their cries were like the north wind whirling terrifically in the forest. By the flames on which they had cooked their final supper they danced, knees bent high and arms like pistons, flickering in a great circle into the ruddy light from the deep shadows of the tall bare trees. And in the midst of them stood Little Turtle on sturdy legs and with backflung head:

"The bones of our dead kinsmen lie uncovered!"

("Ai, ai, avenge our dead kinsmen.") The answer was a dolorous chanting.

"They cry to us to avenge their wrongs."

("Ai, ai, we shall avenge them.")

"Their spirit must be appeased."

"Our grandfathers, shaded guardians of our honor, cry out, 'Seek the Long Knives, murderers of our kinsmen, destroyers of our cabins!' "

The answering chant grew fiercer.

"Let your bodies grow warm with your valor!"

The dancing became more vehement and the ground throbbed with the thud of moccasins. The chant rose to a pitch, eerie as the baying of a hound beneath the moon, louder than a pack of circling wolves.

"Console the spirit of our dead. Heap back the earth on their uncovered bones!"

"Our hearts beat high, O Little Turtle!"

"Ai, ai, on to the Long Knives!"

They poured down the southward trail, Little Turtle and his Miami warriors leading the way. Then of a sudden there was noise no longer, no sound but the smooth glide of wary feet over the dead grass beneath the moonlit trees. McDermott rose from the heap of embers. It was a cold, still night, toward morning snow began to fall, and as he walked back along the Maumee to his cabin he felt weary and perplexed. For so long it had been his desire to see the tribes of the Ohio country united, a solid force demanding what was their due.

XVI

YOUNG George sat with his back against the rude mantelpiece and his buckskin-covered legs stretched out before the fire in the hearth. Beside him lay the pup, whose nose was against his knee and whose silken ear he held between his fingers. By the light of the candle on the plain table his mother knitted, her lips and brow intently puckered while thoughtful shadows darkened her large brown eyes. Now and again the needles clicked, the backlog snapped, sizzled as a flame curled underneath the bark; and outside the late November wind was like a great breath panting above the leafless trees. But all those sounds were so usual to young George that he scarcely heard them. Frowning, he asked slowly: "Why don't you tell me some more about our own folks?"

"Our own folks?" Charity looked down and smiled. "Sho', Georgie boy, what's there to tell that ain't been told?"

George rubbed the pup's ear, gazing steadily into the flames. "I like to hear it anyhow. You go ahead."

"To hear you talk," protested Charity, "a body might think the words'ld roll right off my tongue like a story book!" Nevertheless she was pleased to be called upon by this tall, quiet young son of hers and enjoyed speaking of those days in Carolina now so far away in time and space. "Well," she said and laughed uncertainly, "the times down there wasn't much like these up here. Down there it seemed like every day in the week was different, not the same the way they air up here."

Young George snorted: "I reckon not."

Charity nodded. "It was a far sight better," she admitted. "Seemed like they was always su'thing about to happen to a body, su'thing to be done the next day."

George rubbed his cheek uneasily: "They's things to do up here. Heaps."

"But not like in Kerliny!" Charity's voice had warmed and enthusiastically she defended the glamour of her remembrances: "Law, why down there they was su'thing to do most every night, prayer meetin's, barn-raisin's and a dance and pretty young gentlemen from the big plantations aridin' and jiggin' and accaryin' on in Morgan's tavern!" She paused, smiling gently.

It was the young men that George liked best to hear about. He said: "How'd they carry on in Morgan's tavern?" His mother was not of much account in answering that question; she always shied a little at the inquiry, but he hoped that with perseverance he might discover more about these youths whose lives were so different from his own. "They go there for spirits, did they?"

"What?" said Charity, as if she had been wakened from a dream. "Oh! Not spirits only, no. They jist spent the evening."

"What doin'?"

"Oh, at their games of whist and palaverin' about things. Pappy never let me go near the tavern of an evenin', but sometimes mammy sent me for a bottle of salt."

"Sounds right sociable," said George, and talk was ended for the night. He sighed. According to his mother they did strange things, these young men of North Carolina. They owned spur-legged cocks that fought

each other and won or lost large sums of money for the men they belonged to. George saw very little sense in that, but he profoundly admired the youths who, in Charity's stories, stood face to face with loaded pistols leveled across a narrow strip of ground and exchanged fire over an affair of honor. Honor he had come to understand as a quality in a man which rose up and made him steadfast when he was being imposed upon. Not that any one had ever tried to get the better of him; they hadn't. In Detroit he and his mother had lived unmolested by the soldiers and traders and about this cabin on the north bank of the Maumee there was nobody but the Indians. Nevertheless at times in day-dreams he would imagine himself an insulted person and the muscles in his right arm would draw up into rigid bands as though he held a duelling pistol in his hand. And again, he would see himself in Morgan's tavern, laughing, downing his tot of rum and shuffling a deck of cards in the company of Carolina buckskin and dandy.

But all those scenes and figures of his mother's recollection were so far away and so unlike what he had known it seemed improbable that he should ever know them. His life was in the wilderness and during that long winter after Spence and Arrowwood went away he saw no white faces besides his mother's and sometimes his father's. It was now December. The snow had come, had gone, would come again. Meanwhile he split logs, chinked up cracks in the cabin on days when he was not hunting with the pup and his musket. The month before, he knew, all of the warriors from the towns along the Grand Glaize had taken the war-path to the south. They had been absent nearly half the month, his father too. But now they were back again

and their bark tents were unusually rich in stores. They seldom came to his father's cabin and young George seldom went to theirs, but tramping over the trail that wriggled through the forest along the north bank of the Maumee he could not help noticing the sacks of flour and meal, the sides of beef and stores of gunpowder which their tents contained. And one bright morning he stopped and stared at a sleek-bellied mare who stood nibbling around the butt of a sapling in front of the tent of old Whingy-Pooshies, a leathery Shawanese brave who was far too old to hunt. He was looking at the bridle and the blanket when the old brave came through the deerskin flap and straightened, his black eyes glinting with good humor.

"Young 'Dermott likes Whingy-Pooshies's horse?"

George nodded: "Where'd you get it?"

Whingy-Pooshies widened his toothless mouth. "My son bring him," he said proudly. "Bring him from the Long Knives."

"That where you got all that flour in your tent?"

The old man bobbed his wrinkled head: "Long Knives want fat bellies. Long Knives take much food to war. Long Knives no eat food now."

"No," agreed George. He didn't like the old man's eyes. They were too bright when he talked about the Long Knives. And somehow George felt uneasy about the grazing horse and the store of provender in the cabin. All of the cabins along the Grand Glaize were filled and it seemed to him as if somebody ought to take the food away from them. There was no doubt that they had met the frontiersmen in battle, had beaten them and ridden away with their stores. And now they would spend a lazy, gluttonous winter until

all the supplies were gone. Then they would have lean months until the shipment of presents came down the Maumee from Detroit to be distributed among them. It shouldn't be, he thought. If they hadn't sense enough to lay up corn and jerk and vegetables to keep them through the winter they ought to be made to go without. He said, "Hyuh, pup," and went away, flushing with resentment.

Soon afterward his father came home, bringing a hind-quarter of venison and two coonskins to be dried. George was in the cabin when he arrived and heard his mother, after she had kissed him, speak her customary words of welcome: "Law, Angus, I hope you're done with your everlastin' traipsein' for a spell."

McDermott slipped his burden from his shoulder and leaned his musket against the unplastered wall. "Cain't never tell," he said and sat astride a stool. "Snow afore morning," he predicted, looking toward George.

Flattered by this recognition of his increasing gumption—his father's remark had been a man to man affair—young George stepped to the door, opened it and stood outside for a moment while he looked searchingly at the gray sky. Coming in, he answered soberly: "Does look like it might."

Charity laughed and placed the kettle nearer the coals. George looked questioningly at her and she said: "You'll be a man right soon, Georgie boy."

Thinking of himself as being fully grown, George was none too pleased. Furthermore, he didn't quite understand what her remark about his approaching manhood had to do with what he had said about snow. As a matter of fact it did snow. While he was carrying the bucket down to the stream for water just before dark he saw the sky suddenly filled with white,

flurrying particles. By morning the clearing was covered from the threshold of the cabin to the fringe of willows at the Maumee's edge. George discovered it early, when he went out to the woodpile. And coming back into the house he said to his father: "It's a mortal shame you fetched that deer."

Angus stretched his legs and observed: "Venison's tol'able good to eat."

"He means," Charity explained to her husband, "he'd like to hunt him but it's like temptin' Providence to go after mo' when we got sich a heap in the house."

George grinned.

His father sighed and said: "Well—a few coon hain't much, one way or t'other."

It wasn't coon that George wanted to hunt for, but his father had suggested it and the pup had been trained to track them down in daylight as well as at night. After breakfast he shouldered the axe and his musket. With the pup leading they went down the clearing and crossed the ice to the other side.

The snow was not deep enough to keep the coon from running, nor had it afterward fallen over their tracks, and thus a few hours after George and his father had set out they found the pup barking at the base of a hollow tree and whining to get inside.

"Go 'way pup!" George scolded and the dog backed with his nose close to the ground. George gripped the axe and began chopping. Whack, whack . . . two coons made a wild scramble, but the pup's jaws got one and Angus' musket sent the other rolling.

They started home, walking close to each other. But before they reached the river they passed a Shawanese who greeted them and George was reminded of the

stores in the Indians' tents. He asked his father: "The Shawanese been afightin' ain't they?"

Angus answered slowly: "Reckon they have."

"Who all they been afightin' with?"

For a moment his father did not speak. Then he said, in a level voice, his head set stiffly: "They's folks that aim to drive 'em off their land."

"Who air they?" persisted his son.

"Oh," his father waved his hand with a kind of anger, "folks way to the south, soldiers and sichlike. A man that set up as guv'nor was leadin' 'em on. St. Clair, they call him an' I hearn it said he reckons on lordin' it over all this land."

George pondered: "Hain't he the right to do it?"

"Do what?" his father's voice came out raspingly.

"What you been asayin'."

"Not him nor any mortal livin'," his father answered sharply.

George felt shaky, nevertheless he had to ask: "Who run?"

"They run!"

"Oh." George's footsteps lagged. He wished they hadn't run, those men from the south, wished also that his father hadn't shown his sympathy for the Indians. During the rest of the way back to the cabin father and son were silent.

A heavy snow fell the next day and throughout the night a loud, swiftly curveting wind whipped up great drafts that become gaunt, white ribs as the next day's sun melted them and the next night's freezing froze them hard. And for all the game there was in the forest the McDermott cabin was often none too well supplied. Because when the snow was deep the coon

refused to run, the bears to desert their nests and the deer were difficult to track.

To George it seemed as if that first winter in the wilderness would never pass. The deep, white silence of January held life motionless. February, though livelier, hid treacherous thaws and roaring storms beneath its sunny smile. But at last came March, a dark month at the beginning, but later on it warmed and the frost oozed up from the hard, black earth. On the rivers the ice broke, came floating down on the rising water which seeped up over the channel and sprawled in great, shallow lakes in the bottom-land.

"Old river gits right rampageous," George told his mother, standing by the cabin door and looking at the sheet of water that covered the clearing halfway up the slope.

Charity watched it anxiously. For a few days they feared that the river would rise still higher and sweep the cabin downstream along with the uprooted trees and dead-wood that marked its bloated surface.

But finally the Maumee slipped back into its channel. Where the turbulent flood had been was a rich coating of mud, fine for planting Indian corn. George set to work with his bags of seed, making little mounds for the dried kernels and covering them over with his hoe. Now and again a group of Shawanese or Miamis, passing along the Maumee's edge, would stop and watch him, staring because he planted in even rows and not in the scattering fashion in which they spread the kernels over the ground. They showed more interest in him than he showed in them. When they stopped he would nod in answer to their grunted greeting and go ahead with his work. They were lazy, without initiative or thrift, and that offended him because it made

them that much more unlike himself. Lord, he would mutter to himself, there was all this work to be done, clearing, planting, laying in supplies, yet all they did was to sit in the sun, hunt when they were hungry and beg from others if the game was too difficult to kill. Once that spring, before the shipment of presents came down from Detroit, a party of them in their loose blankets came up to the cabin, drawn by the smell of cornbread which his mother was baking. They stood unbudging by the door until Charity gave them food. George was furious for days on account of it.

Grubbing stumps in the clearing was the hardest work he had ever done. His hands, toughened as they were, became blistered and often at night his wrists and shoulders pained from hacking at the wood and roots. But he could see what each day's labor had accomplished, could stand in the bottom-land and look up toward the cabin over a rolling stretch of green that was no longer so studded with hardwood butts as it once had been. And while he worked he would sometimes straighten up and gaze to east and west and north, thinking that some day there would be great fields instead of the forest growth that surrounded the cabin. That, he thought, was a sight worth working toward.

Sometimes his father helped, but more often he was absent during the day, off among the Indians, George knew vaguely. During the summer three white men came up from the south to treat with the tribes of the Ohio country. But they went away again and nothing was changed by their coming or going. George heard about them but did not see them. Afterward while hunting near the swamp about ten miles south of the cabin he met Peter Cornstalk, one of the sons of Chief

Cornstalk who had been murdered in a blockhouse along the Ohio, and this young Shawanese told him: "The Long Knives come. They say 'treat with us.' They want our land. 'Yes,' our sachems and warriors say, 'we treat with you. Give us back our hunting-grounds from the big lake to the Ohio shores and we will talk.' But the Long Knives say 'no' and go away." Laying his hand on George's shoulder he smiled.

But George moved uncomfortably away.

Summer passed and the yield of grain and vegetables was good. In the fall he went out among the groves of hickory, butternut and walnut trees and gathered sacks of nuts, storing them with the corn, the pumpkins and turnips which were to last throughout the winter. And in November he and his father and the pup tracked a lumbering black bear into a swamp and treed it. The bear was huge and the sapling so slender that George feared every moment it would break beneath the weight. Ten feet below the pup leaped upward with a keen eager whining and at either side stood George and his father with their loaded muskets. A shot from his father's musket brought it down. It reared on its haunches, squealing with rage. The pup leaped, but a heavy paw slapped out and the dog went rolling over and over. Three paces distant George's musket roared. The bear toppled, lost its balance and the sore-ribbed pup sprang for its moist, black nose. McDermott's knife ended its squealing and floundering; they had to make a sledge in order to get the carcase home.

Then he was proud of himself for a while. And he wanted to go about telling people, "I killed a bear," but there was nobody to listen to him. For it would have been no pleasure to inform the Indians that he had brought down a residenter. Their intelligence in

general was not lively and their interest in his prowess would have taken the form of asking him for a slice of the meat. Besides, he wanted to talk to somebody who would be impressed and at the same time somebody whom he could respect. If only there were some of those young Carolinians within shouting distance, he thought longingly.

Late that winter the pup disappeared. One morning in February George awoke and he wasn't there. Snow tracks led down toward the river and were lost in the wet grass where patches of white had thawed. George called, "Hyuh pup! hyuh pup!" but there was no answer. He walked along the trail toward the Shawanese villages, but discovered no sign. Turning back, he went in the other direction for nearly a mile, but all he saw were the prints of moccasins. Breathing quickly, he returned to the cabin.

His father sat at the table and his mother was carrying a kettle from the hearth. She looked at him casually, then sharply and asked in a startled voice: "Why George, yo're right peaked!"

His lip trembled and he bit it. "The pup's gone."

"Sho'," said his father, "it'll come back. Like as not it's after a cottontail."

"No," said George, "that pup'ld never go off alone like that."

"Well," comforted his mother, "set down to yore vittles."

He turned away. "Do' want none." He sat staring at the wall. "Them damned Indians—I bet—I bet they're a-eatin' it right now!" he said shrilly. Vividly the picture of a family of Indians gathered around a fire on which the pup was being roasted leaped before his eyes. The picture faded and left him staring at a splotch

of red, and he stumbled forward, grasping for his musket in the corner. "I'm agoin'——"

"Where?" his father interrupted sharply.

He stopped, clenching his fists. "I'm agoin' to find that pup or go to shootin'!"

"No you hain't." His father's bulk confronted him. "You season yourself an' keep yore hands offen that gun till you do."

For a moment George met his angry eyes, then sat down abruptly. "Well," he muttered with dazed stubbornness.

His father stared at him with grim eyes and his jaw set hard. "Go to eatin'!" he commanded and resumed his place at the table.

Twisting uncomfortably under his mother's large, grieving eyes, George drew his chair up to the table. His father said no more about the threat, nor did he. And though it might have been forgotten if the pup had been found George could not help feeling resentful so long as he believed the Indians had done away with it. Through the rest of the winter and the following spring he kept by himself, hunting and making long journeys about the countryside alone.

One day in the summer between planting and harvesting he set out over the trail that wound beside the Maumee toward the bay. The day was fine and he had a desire to see Lake Erie. And as his father was at home and there was no reason for him to return at once he walked on until nightfall, built a fire by which he slept, and continued ahead the next morning. Soon he reached the head of the rapids, where the water frisked over a bed of stones and boulders. And as he went on he saw a clearing and a number of log cabins which, he judged, had been put up as a trading-post that winter. They

were now empty, but a little farther on he saw men working, Canadian rangers. There were twenty or thirty of them; some were digging a great ditch and others were fashioning logs. For a while he watched from a distance, then he strode nearer.

"Hi-yah, lad," one of the workmen called.

George touched his cap: "Mornin'."

The ranger grinned and spat on his hands: "Walk straight outen the wilderness, won't you, lad?"

George grounded his musket and looked on thoughtfully: "What air you makin'?"

A ranger down in the ditch with a shovel answered: "Might call it a grave if your mind took a turn that way."

"Take a pretty big man to fill a grave like this'n," said George. The ditch ran at right angles from the rapids, was about five feet deep and fifty feet long.

"P'raps a deal of men'ld fill it though," answered one of the shovelers.

George fell silent, realizing that only in this way would he learn why the men were digging the ground and hewing the logs. A little distance from where they worked was a heap of faggots and a pile of long poles which had been cut to a point at one end. He walked about, casually investigating.

After a while a sweating workman rested his axe and said: "Be a stunner of a fort one of these days now."

"Be strong enough," answered another, "to stand off any American soldiers, happen any find their way up this far."

George stared in surprise at the speakers; moving closer he waited, so intently listening that he was unaware of the approach of a tall, dour man with sideburns who appeared to be in charge of the work.

"What you want here, youngster?"

George started. "Oh," he said, "I jist come."

"Where from?" the man's eyes grew sharp and he stepped nearer.

"Up the river by the Glaize," George answered.

The man's face cleared: "Then you're Angus McDermott's boy."

"Yes," said George.

"Well," said the man reflectively: "Here's a good place for you when the Americans come."

"When they comin'?" asked George.

The man shook his head. "Take a wiser man'n me to answer that."

George turned away, feeling that he had got as much information as he could carry. A good deal, he thought, had been going on in the Ohio country and he had known nothing about it. A fort here in the wilderness, an attacking army up this far—but no, he couldn't believe it. Those men at work back there were only trying to find out how much he would swallow without blinking. He began his journey back home.

XVII

McDERMOTT sat on the door-step of the cabin, listening vaguely to Charity moving quietly about inside, gazing down the slope at the patch of corn and vegetables which George had planted. For the time of year the green stalks stood high and their long even rows were pleasant to see. George, he knew, had worked hard during the two years of living in the wilderness; because of him the clearing now was smooth and had a cultivated air that made it unlike any piece of ground within a hundred miles. The hands of George had wrought the difference almost unaided, but some day soon now, McDermott told himself, he and George would begin working together again, clearing more land and perhaps putting up a log barn for the winters' stores. Only a little longer and the fate of the Ohio country would be known, but until then he must continue with the Indians toward whose possession of the Ohio country he had been laboring.

Well, he thought, that great tract of hunting-ground would remain their own. The confederacy had been formed and so far had functioned well. Three commissioners from the south had come up to treat with the Indians a short while after St. Clair's army had been routed. But the commandant at Detroit had sent down word to sachems and chiefs advising them to make no concessions to the Long Knives inside the Ohio country. It was what the tribes wanted and what McDermott had worked for. And strengthened by their recent victory over frontiersmen and soldiers and by promises of assistance from Detroit, the sachems had

replied: "Let the Long Knives withdraw to the farther shores of the Ohio River, leaving their forts and villages which they have built on Indian land. Then the confederacy will treat, but not before." With those words the commissioners had gone away. Since then the Long Knives to the south and east had been silent.

But of late there had been an uneasy stirring among the Shawanese and Miamis, the Wyandots and Delawares. Wyandot runners had come up from the land near the mouth of the Muskingum with information that the Long Knives were gathering another army. Later the army was reported to have moved to Fort Washington and to be commanded by General Wayne. And it was in connection with this that McDermott was waiting on the door-step of his cabin that late June morning of the second summer that he and Charity and George had spent near the Grand Glaize. A conference was to be called, such meetings lasted for days, and McDermott intended to stay in his cabin until the chiefs and sachems had assembled.

As he sat there Charity's footsteps came nearer the threshold and stopped. She said: "You fixin' to gallivant some more?"

He turned his head and nodded: "Reckon so."

She frowned: "Where to?"

"Oh," he said casually, "down the river."

Vigorously she slapped the palms of her hands together, brushing off particles of corn meal which she was baking. "Beats all them Indians cain't look after themselves."

He stared thoughtfully beyond the clearing to the river. He could see it above the tops of corn rolling bright and smooth between green banks. "Reckon they

could," he answered, "if they was left to themselves."

Charity sat down beside him, holding her chin in her hand. " 'Pears to me like them folks up at Detroit ain't leavin' them much to themselves."

"No," he said, "they're ahelpin' 'em. They's a deal o' difference when you help an' when you hinder."

"Ain't always sich a heap o' difference," Charity replied.

"Sho'," he scolded good-humoredly, "you addle my head when you talk thataway! They ain't no sense to it."

"Ain't they?" challenged Charity with a sidelong glance.

"Not nohow."

"H'm." She paused, sniffed once and left him. "I do believe that dough's a burnin'."

He lighted his pipe and leaned back against the wall. The Indian runner who was to summon him to the council ought to arrive shortly. He was ready to go, would leave as soon as the runner came, but he hoped that George returned first. George had gone fishing by a clump of willows a few miles up the river. He was always going off by himself these days, McDermott thought. Whatever had gotten into the boy, whatever the cause of it, he was keeping clear of his father. McDermott knew this, but could find no way to bring him back. As he sat there he thought: Now that hound of his! Mad enough to kill because the hound was gone! No, George didn't like the Indians, that was the truth. He'd run a race with a prime young buck, beat him and then walk off by himself. But he didn't like them. He hadn't favored it when he had heard that St. Clair's army had been whipped. McDermott was unable to understand why George would rather have had the

Indians lose. For, he asked himself, who were those men in St. Clair's army and what connection had they with George? They were white, of course, but then so were the people up at Detroit. It was too deep to fathom, but he did wish George would come home before he had to leave.

It was the runner that came first. He was paddling up-stream in a birch canoe and drew the craft up to the landing. McDermott knocked out his pipe and went into the cabin. "Well," he said to Charity, "they come for me."

She looked up at him forlornly: "I been expectin' they would."

"Sho'," he stepped uncomfortably toward his musket, " 'twon't be long."

"No," she said doubtfully.

"Not more'n a few days, nohow." He had got the musket.

She echoed stupidly: "No, not more'n a few days."

"Where's that leather pouch?" It wasn't hanging on its usual peg.

"It's under your nose," she said and pointed toward the corner of the cabin.

"Oh." He slung the pouch over his shoulder and took up his musket. "Well—" he hesitated, asking as always, "you hain't afeared, not with the boy at hand?"

She answered as she had grown used to answering: "No, I feel right safe."

" 'Twon't be long," he repeated.

"No," she said dully.

"Only a short spell an' I'll be home."

At last she smiled: "I'll be awaitin' for you."

The moving shadow of the Indian runner fell across

the cabin floor. "Well," he kissed her quickly and went out.

"The council ready to talk?" he asked the Miami as they walked down the slope together.

"They talk to-morrow night," the runner answered, leading the way around the corn-field to the landing where the birch canoe had been made fast.

McDermott took his place forward, kneeling and lifting the smooth, light paddle. The canoe skimmed out toward the current, manned by two straight-backed, silent figures who stared steadily ahead.

They had thirty miles to paddle before reaching the council-fires of the confederacy. There, at the head of the Maumee rapids, the representatives of the various tribes were gathering to decide in the names of their people what was to be done about this threatened advance of the Long Knives. Spies had been sent out months before and had discovered that a large body of troops had been organized beyond the east bank of the Ohio River, in Pennsylvania, and that day after day these men did nothing but march back and forth over a level field, wheeling, flanking, splitting up into sections and coming together again to resume their marching. And at that time the confederacy had expected the Long Knives were preparing to attack the towns about Upper Sandusky where the Wyandots and Delawares lived. But the Long Knives had not come. And the Indians, grown tired of waiting, had sent other scouts to the south. But these had brought back the puzzling report that the army which had marched and wheeled and flanked so strangely had disappeared. Then, much later, Shawanese hunters came hurrying north to the council-fire with the news that the Long Knives had crossed the Ohio country westward and were building

a fort south of the Mackachak towns near where St. Clair had been defeated more than two years before. Now it was time for the confederacy to take some action.

Late at night McDermott's canoe slipped among the other craft which were beached some distance from the council-fire. Stepping over the side he walked toward a heap of embers around which a group of braves were seated on their blankets. He nodded to each in turn and joined them.

"It is good to see our white brother."

"Ai"—McDermott recognized the voice of Wayweleapy, one of the chief speakers of the Shawanese—"our white brother warms us like the sun."

"The Great Spirit is in Wayweleapy's tongue," said McDermott, and added, "the camp keeps awake late to-night."

Old Blackhoof, a small, dried-up Shawanese chieftain who was in his late seventies but still willing to fight, answered: "We wait for Blue Jacket."

"Blue Jacket speaks with his runners who have come from the Long Knives' camp," explained Bringing Along, a warrior of the Delawares.

Then hoofbeats sounded along the trail near the river, and a voice called out: "Chief Blackhoof!"

"This way," answered Blackhoof; "I am here, Chief Blue Jacket."

Blue Jacket dismounted and strode among them. Flinging his blanket to the ground he sat upon it, folding his arms about his knees.

"Let Blue Jacket speak," suggested Wayweleapy.

The Shawanese chief warrior snorted. "Blue Jacket wastes no words on stones."

"Then speak," chided Wayweleapy; "we are no stones."

Blue Jacket stared broodingly at the embers. "The council is a stone! It does not move! It does not speak! It does not hear! It is a stone. It remains a stone while the Long Knives march upon our towns."

From the darkness by a fallen log a warrior called: "Patience, Blue Jacket. The council speaks to-morrow."

It was Little Turtle. He had been sleeping, but now he came forward, his face round and placidly smiling in the dull red glow.

"Ho! to-morrow!" ejaculated Blue Jacket.

Little Turtle stepped toward McDermott and laid a friendly hand on his shoulder. "Walk with me," he said.

McDermott stood up and followed him down to the trail by the moonlit rapids. Little Turtle did not stop there, however, but went on, leading the way through scraggly fields of corn that covered the bottom-land. They walked quietly for nearly an hour, McDermott meanwhile wondering where he was being taken. But at last Little Turtle stopped and pointed through the luminous atmosphere toward the fort at the foot of the rapids. It had been completed that spring, and now reared by the river bank with faith-inspiring solidity.

"There," said Little Turtle.

McDermott nodded, knowing what was in his mind. "The Long Knives could never come this far," he said.

"There are big guns in the white father's fort. Would they bark if the Long Knives stood where we stand?"

"The white father," said McDermott, "has spoken that all of the Ohio country belongs to his Indian children." That, to his mind, answered the question.

After a while they returned to the camp and rolled

up in their blankets. Waking in full daylight McDermott smelled the odor of a great pot of meat and vegetables, and heard many pairs of moccasins moving about among the trees. And by the afternoon all of the sachems and warriors had assembled, bringing with them the bundles of red faggots which had been sent to them as a symbol that they had been called for the purpose of discussing war.

In an opening a few hundred yards from the river the chief sachems of the tribes formed themselves in a circle, and McDermott with the other members of the council marched three times around them in single file. At length the leader of the file stopped behind the sachem who stood at the eastern rim and laid down his bundle of faggots. The others followed, and when the last had been dropped on the ground they drew away while Wayweleapy lighted them. When the sticks of cedar burned he stepped forward and thanked the Great Spirit, the Earth and the Sun respectively for sparing the warriors' lives, giving them food, and for light and warmth.

Then they considered what was to be done about the Long Knives.

Blue Jacket, his round head appearing to be set flat upon his bulky shoulders, rose with uplifted hand. "Brothers and cousins, before the moon is full the Long Knives will be upon us, their hatchets red with the blood of our kinsmen. Twice, ai, three times they have fled from our warriors! Why stand we here like squaws!"

Next came the aged Tarhe the Crane. "Chief Blue Jacket is our war-commander, and speaks for the warriors. Tarhe speaks for all the people. Tarhe's people say: 'The Long Knives have many men and great guns

that roar like thunder.' Is it not wise to treat with the Long Knives' captain and save the blood of our young men?"

Bockongahelas stood up gravely. "It is the truth that Tarhe speaks. The Long Knives have men who number like the leaves on the greatest tree. But has not the white captain beyond the lake many men? Has he not promised that all the land belongs to us, his children. Ai, the ears of Bockongahelas have heard the white father speak those words."

McDermott, who had been anxious because of what Tarhe had said, was reassured by the speech of Bockongahelas. But an instant afterward Hopocan had arisen and, turning toward McDermott so that the others also faced him, had rapidly begun:

"Brothers and cousins, listen to Hopocan! He will not deceive you! Is not this your father?" He stamped his moccasined foot upon the grass. "Have you another father than the earth that bore you? This man in the town beyond the lake that calls you his children, what has he done for you? Presents, you say! Ai, food for strengthening when you fight his battles! But where are the men he promised us to help fight our war? Let us depend on the aid of the white father," his thin lips twisted satirically as he paused; then he ejaculated, "when he sends his soldiers to fight by our sides!"

Blue Jacket was scowling at Captain Pipe, and old Blackhoof's wrinkled mouth had drawn into a straight, disapproving line, but many of the Miamis and Delawares were staring at McDermott suspiciously as he stood to defend the commandant at Detroit. Angered and grieving that he who had worked so long for the liberation of the Indian country should be even indirectly accused, he stepped forward as if to strike Cap-

tain Pipe with his fists. But getting hold of himself he drew up stiffly:

"You Indians who call me your brother! When have you known me to carry a false word? When has your white father beyond the lake made you a promise he has not fulfilled? Let your eyes travel down along the rapids where you will see one of the white father's houses which he has built to protect you! Is not that enough? Should he do more than bring the roaring guns that drive away the enemy? Hopocan has spoken that he will not deceive you. McDermott says 'let not yourselves be deceived by Hopocan!' "

But he did not carry the sachems and warriors with him. Even his friend, Little Turtle, wanted greater proof than that which was given by the silent fort by the foot of the rapids. After McDermott had ended, the chief warrior of the Miamis, and equal in power to Blue Jacket with whom he shared the chieftainship of the confederacy, addressed the council, calmly but authoritatively:

"My brothers," said Little Turtle, "Hopocan has spoken wisely. Let us send a runner to the white father in the town beyond the lake. Let him repeat his promises in our runner's hearing, telling us how many men we may expect to fight against the Long Knives. And let us wait until our runner returns."

"Ai," growled Blue Jacket, "who will hold the Long Knives while we wait."

Little Turtle was thoughtful a moment. Then he said: "The forest will hold the Long Knives. They do not travel like our warriors, but have to cut their way through the trees with their carriages."

Thus the council of the confederated tribes began a recess that lasted for several days. That evening a run-

ner was sent to Detroit. McDermott watched him leave, and after he had gone sat broodingly apart from the others. There was, he knew, nothing he could do but wait, a necessity that was all the more disagreeable because he felt that Little Turtle had doubted him. That night he built his own fire and while the Indians gathered around a great, steaming pot, roasted corn which he had husked in the bottom-lands.

Later, however, he heard the rustle of moccasins in the grass, and Little Turtle called: "McDermott!"

McDermott raised his eyes to the round, tranquil face above him and said: "Sit down."

Little Turtle put down his blanket and drew his legs beneath him. After a silence he said: "Only enemies should hold anger, not friends."

McDermott's brow unfurrowed; he almost smiled. "You and I are not enemies," he said.

"No," agreed Little Turtle. Some time later he spoke:

"Blue Jacket will not wait. He has gone to fight the Long Knives and to bring the big guns left by the other Long Knives when they ran."

"Blue Jacket has gone for the messenger?" asked McDermott.

Little Turtle slowly inclined his head. "He has gone for his warriors to lead them against the Long Knives."

"His heart is strong," said McDermott. He didn't know what else to say. For Blue Jacket to attack independently was not his idea of how a confederacy should function. But there was nothing to be done about it. For from the lowest brave to the highest war-chief there was nobody to command the Indian to fight or not to fight.

That night and the next day passed. McDermott

waited, eager for the runner to return. In another day it was July and still the messenger, who had altogether less than a hundred and fifty miles to travel, did not come. McDermott's anxiety increased, and on the third day he sat much of the time looking along the trail that led northward. Blue Jacket had gone to the south with several hundred swiftly mounted warriors, and the council seemed a useless thing, unnaturally born and unnaturally held together. Meanwhile there was nothing that could be done.

Blue Jacket and his warriors had been riding four days to the south when the runner returned from Detroit. McDermott saw him half a mile down the trail and called to Little Turtle. Together they waited, watching him poking along on his gray horse and, as he came nearer, seeing that he carried a large bag before him.

Several other warriors had also come to welcome the runner. He climbed down, solemn but obviously well satisfied with his journey.

"You travel like a toad," scolded Little Turtle. "What is in that sack?"

"Ai, what is in the sack?" and a warrior, not waiting to be told, dragged it down to the ground.

"Old Shin waited for the white father," said the runner, and lowered his eyes in pleasant contemplation of a string of new beads about his neck.

"How did the white father speak?" asked McDermott quickly.

Old Shin pointed to the now open bag. "The white father sent many presents," and added as an afterthought, "the white father is sending two companies of his own children to the fort to fight the Long Knives."

McDermott breathed out and straightened his shoulders as if he had just cast a heavy burden from his back.

Little Turtle nodded. "When Blue Jacket comes," he said to McDermott, "the council will finish talking."

McDermott said nothing. It seemed foolish to him for them to wait, for Blue Jacket might very well not return. Patiently he remained with the warriors and sachems, comforted through the passing days by the renewed promise that when the Long Knives came Detroit could be depended on to face them.

One morning a week after the runner had returned with the welcome news from the white father in the town beyond the lake, Blue Jacket appeared at the head of what remained of his warriors. He rode in, black with fury and disappointment, sprang off his horse and sat through half the day without speaking. Then he began pacing back and forth over the grass, muttering: "We fight, we fight the Long Knives! Let no man speak for a treaty!"

Not from him but from one of his warriors McDermott learned that afternoon what had happened to the expedition. Blue Jacket had gone to the scene of the battle with St. Clair for the double purpose of attacking the enemy and retrieving the field-pieces which St. Clair had abandoned, and which the Indians had dismounted and cached in hollow logs. But the guns had been discovered by the new army, and Blue Jacket had found a fort instead. For a full day and night he had attempted to break through the fire, but finally, with two hundred men fallen, he had ridden away with his dead and wounded.

Blue Jacket was still dumb with fury when the council reassembled to discuss whether it would be unani-

mously for war, for peace, or whether it would end in disagreement, thus leaving each of the tribes free to decide how its warriors would meet the Long Knives' army.

Anxiously McDermott took his seat between Wayweleapy and Little Turtle.

XVIII

IT was the summer that George McDermott was eighteen, a hot day in mid-July, and he stood in the corn-field that covered the bottom-land and stared between the tall rows growing up from the baked earth with its criss-cross fissures to the flowing waters of the Maumee, low in its banks. His expression was one of dissatisfaction, there was an uncertainty in his eyes, and as he swung his unwieldy grubbing hoe he looked thoughtfully up toward the cabin on the green knoll. His father had been gone three weeks. His mother, he knew, was inside making the noonday meal; soon she would be coming to the open door to call him. This he dreaded, for he had long been making up his mind and had at last resolved upon something that would give her pain. And there was no more time in which to put off the telling of it.

George knew that for more than a year now General Wayne had been cautiously advancing into the Ohio country with his army, the Legion of the United States. And he had recently heard from a Shawanese warrior that the general was about a hundred miles south of the Grand Glaize. This knowledge furnished the plan that had grown in his mind during the time that Wayne had been in the Ohio country. But it was only that morning that he had made his decision.

"George!"

It was his mother calling him, and shouldering his hoe he went doggedly toward the cabin. Inside there was fish, bread, and coffee on the rude table. As he sat

down he said: "Got the corn hoed. Ain't much more I kin do now for a while."

His mother gazed admiringly upon him. "Looks right fine. Makes the Indian fields look that puny!"

"Indians don't even hardly scratch the ground, that's why." He spoke sombrely for a youth of his age, frowning a little because he had made a poor beginning for what was uppermost in his mind.

"Plenty more in the skillet," she said. Refilling his empty plate she sat across from him, holding her small chin in her brown hands.

He asked hurriedly: "Reckon you could do without me for a while?" and tried to hide the anxiety with which he awaited her answer.

She looked at him sharply: "It ain't the season for you to be atraipsein' off. Where'ld you go to?"

"I'm agoin' to the south," he said.

"How fur to the south?" She disguised her own uneasiness.

He shook his head. "Cain't say," and went on, "ain't it so my grampappy an' gramammy come from the country on t'other side of the Ohio?" He knew, but he wanted her words to give him courage.

His mother nodded enthusiastically. "As if I wasn't raised in Kerliny as a girl! We'd been there yet," she said reflectively, "if there hadn't been so many 'tarnal black-folks that we couldn't make our livin' raisin' cotton."

"I don't care nothin' about them black-folks, I'm atalkin' about folks like us." He paused. "Right fine people, was they?"

She smiled with happy reminiscence. "Why," she said, repeating what she had told him often, "yore eyes'ld pop right out at their goin's on! Afiddlin' and

adancin' and carousin' in the taverns! An' the menfolk dressed fit to kill an' sashayin' a body till her head swum right on her shoulders." Her eyes dimmed as she looked at him.

"I'd admire to be with folks like them," he said gravely. "I aim to, 'sho."

Her lips quirked with sorrow. "We won't never see Kerliny again."

He said: "Be some of 'em with Wayne's Legion, surely."

Charity was silent.

Again he asked: "Reckon you could spare me?"

She breathed in quickly: "You'd jine 'em?"

"That I would." He stared grimly at the table.

"You'd go agin your pappy!"

He flushed. "Pappy ain't no Indian."

Sorrowfully she gazed at him. "He's powerful mixed up with 'em."

"But I ain't," he said stubbornly. "An' I ain't messed up with the British, either. They ain't my folks no more'n the Indians."

"You're livin' on their land," she timidly rebuked him.

" 'Tain't their land," he denied. "It's our folks' land. The British air akeepin' the Indians stirred up so they kin git it theirselves. An' they ain't got the right to keep Fort Miami down there at the foot of the rapids, neither!" He pushed back the chair and walked to the wall to take down his musket. "Well," he added uneasily, "I'm agoin' now."

She put her hand to her breast and there were tears in her eyes.

He stared at her in consternation. Dropping to his knees beside her he circled her shoulders with his free

arm: "Don't be tearful, mammy; lord! don't be tearful; I won't go nohow if you feel thataway," he cried, and his dreams went crumbling. He had an acute vision of himself remaining among the Indians while Wayne and his Legion advanced upon them. And the disappointment of not being with the Legion, his people, brought tears of his own. He went on chokingly: "Don't take on, mammy; I never meant to hurt you. Why, I wouldn't go—you know I wouldn't go!" Her hand was pushing him, but he held her more tightly, his words of consolation sounding in a singsong, and his eyes dark with despair.

But while she was still crying he heard her say vehemently: "Go! I wouldn't put up with your stayin'! Go! I want you to!" Her tears increased.

He kissed her, then took up his musket and went out the cabin door. Shamefaced for having taken her at her word, yet with hope mounting again, he hurried down the knoll and through the corn-field toward the river's edge.

He had never felt so much scorn for the Indians as he felt then. The poorly tended bottom-lands where they had their little fields and gardens looked thin and scraggly, and there were hollows in them where no grain grew at all; the passive faces of the squaws sitting with their scrambling, squalling children in the sunshine before the tents, the lazy bucks slapping listlessly at the swarming flies, their hand-to-mouth existence and their wandering about from one place when the game got scarce to another where it would be less trouble to find their food—those things gave young George a sharp disgust as he strode past the villages, nodding shortly to this buck and that.

There was a great nostalgia in him, not for another

country, but for another people. The Ohio country was good enough: with the few implements at hand he had raised three crops, and had had sufficient left over to sell; the Maumee was alive with fish, and as for game and furs there was no end of them. But the people—that was a different matter! He walked quickly toward the south where there were men of his own blood.

The day was hot and the sun beat down from directly overhead. And after a while he left the path by the bottom-lands and struck the trail that led through the shaded sultry stretch of forest. Once in a while through the long afternoon he passed an Indian, and they greeted each other with a nod or an upraised hand.

He slept that night beside a fallen log. By daybreak he was going forward again toward this place that General Wayne had built and called Fort Greenville. General Wayne—Mad Anthony, they called him! It sounded good. It sounded promising. A man like that, thought young McDermott, would not be the kind who would hold a grudge against another man even if that man was with the enemy. He walked with a quiet briskness, seeing ahead through the green forest.

As he lay down in the darkness of the second night he wondered how he would come upon the army and get through the pickets to General Wayne. Sometimes soldiers shot first and talked afterward, and he didn't want to be killed by a scout who mistook him for an Indian, or by a surprised sentry at the outpost. And from that he tried to picture what these men would be like, his mother's people and his father's people. He had a terrific longing to see them.

He reached the prairie land by the St. Mary's River in the afternoon of the fourth day, and before the next

evening he had sighted the stockade and the rows of log houses of Fort Greenville, where the main body of the Legion was quartered.

He stood watching for a moment. A soldier, carrying his musket at an angle, appeared from around the corner of the stockade, paced to the gate, then turned and went back again. McDermott saw him talking to another soldier, who likewise carried a musket, at the blockhouse. George McDermott walked quickly forward.

"Halt!" The soldier, swinging back toward the entrance, brought down his musket with a challenge.

Young McDermott eyed him warily. "I'm ahaltin'." He stopped.

"What you up to outside the stockade?"

"I'm agoin' in," said young McDermott, and grinned a little.

"Go 'long then," ordered the sentry, and turned to walk his post again.

McDermott passed inside where he stopped in astonishment. He had never seen so many log houses in his life, or so many soldiers and frontiersmen. Everywhere in the streets marked off by the orderly rows of cabins there were men moving, sauntering about their own business, leading horses of which there seemed to be an incalculable number, cleaning bayonets and equipment, and marching back and forth in squads. The sight confused and delighted him. There was movement, action, and he could sense a rough familiarity. And stepping up to a man who wore a homespun linen shirt and a coonskin cap, he asked: "Mister, kin you say where a mortal'ld find General Wayne?"

The man scratched his ear, spat copiously, and

stared. "Tan my britches, buckskin! You an' the gineral ol' friends, air you?"

George's cheeks got hot, but he stared back coolly. "Like as not I'm a friend of his'n, but that ain't what I ast you."

The lean man inspected him further and then said: "Y'see that log house up there with the flag aflyin' by it?"

George nodded.

"Well, that's where you'll find the gineral. Only take caution, buckskin, or he'll chaw you up finer'n a puddin'."

"I thank you," said George stiffly, and walked forward toward the building to which his informant had pointed. It was a log house very much like all the others except that it was a few feet longer and that there was a soldier standing guard at the door. "Good day," he said to the soldier, and slipped inside.

By the door he stopped abruptly. Lining the walls were two benches with more men sitting on them; in the middle of the room a sergeant and a lieutenant were talking, and at the back he could see figures lying. The one officer was young and did not look like a general, George decided. He asked, hesitantly: "Now General Wayne ain't here, I reckon?"

With varying expressions of surprise and entertainment the several faces turned toward him, and he heard the officer asking him: "Godamighty, boy, where did you come from?"

The question, which was rhetorical and meant solely to confound, was taken literally by George, and he replied: "Sir, I come from up by the Grand Glaize, an' I'm alookin' for General Wayne."

The officer led the laughter. "Never heard tell of the

Grand Glaize, buckskin; if you don't look sharp someone'll be playing General Wayne on your backside before you know it."

"That they won't!" denied young George, and uneasily tightened his hold on his musket.

One of the soldiers spoke up: "Leftenant, sir, hain't that Grand Glaize in the Injun country? Seems like I heard tell it was."

The officer left off smiling and grew stern. "That a fact, boy?"

Young George said: "Right smack in it." He watched the officer and the sergeant exchange meaningful glances.

At length the officer told him: "Boy, you come with me!" and added ominously, "Reckon the general'ld a'most give his noggin to see you."

George willingly followed the officer out the door. Walking with him between the rows of log huts, he asked: "Leftenant, what was that place back there?"

"That," said the lieutenant, "is where you're liable to spend the night if you don't talk pretty to the general. It's the guard-house."

George gulped and glanced suspiciously at the lieutenant. That lean soldier at the gate had made a fool of him, he saw now. As for the officer he, with his threat of the guard-house, might be even worse. And George concluded that the ways of these people were curious, and would bear watching.

The pressure of the officer's hand on his arm guided him to the left where there was a cabin before which a sentry stood. The door was open and George could see a number of important-looking officers standing together and conversing in low voices. One or two of

them nodded to the lieutenant, but most of them continued talking. While George waited the lieutenant dexterously skirted the group of officers and moved toward a closed door at the rear. He rapped on the rough planks.

"Well?"

"Officer of the day, sir."

"Come in."

George saw the officer disappear and stood there, feeling as if he would like to crawl under the floor and hide. For there was a way about these men which made him believe that if they turned to notice him at all their eyes would stare holes through him; and from the sound of General Wayne's voice behind the closed door he felt that any manner of summary treatment might be expected. For the general's tone was cold and dry and steady.

Shortly the door was opened and the lieutenant motioned toward him brusquely. He gripped his musket and stepped quickly forward, trying to master his intimidation. The lieutenant moved aside to let him enter, and he found himself facing a man who would loom tall when he arose from the cot on which he sat, a man of about fifty, with light, bold eyes and wavy hair, a frank, challenging face; below his jutting chin was a faultlessly white stock with a ruff that spread above the V-shaped collar of the blue jacket.

"Pull that cap off," snapped the lieutenant.

George removed the squirrelskin instantly, but anger made his cheeks flush. Nobody had ever spoken to him like that before, and he said hotly: "You hold your tongue!" He and the lieutenant glared at each other.

The man on the cot smiled. "Hold on now, sonny!

Keep your bear-baitin' for a time when it will come in handier."

George grinned in embarrassment. "Ain't done no bear-baitin', general." If the general talked like that the interview wouldn't be so harrowing; it almost put a man on an equal footing with him if he talked about bear-baitin', thought George; a real, downright pleasantry, it was. He waited.

"What's your name, boy?"

"Name's McDermott, general, sir!"

"Come from up by the Grand Glaize, do you?"

"Lived there nigh three year now," George told him.

General Wayne looked at him sharply. "Angus McDermott your father?"

"He's my pappy, sir," admitted George.

"Still fighting against his native land?" asked the general.

George was puzzled at this. "Don't know where you mean. He was born in the Pennsylvania country, but he ain't been in no war with *them.*"

"With the Indians now, is he?" continued the general.

"Reckon so," said George.

The general's voice grew colder and more metallic. "What brought you here, boy?"

"Come down to jine you," replied George promptly.

Wayne grunted. "You don't favor the Indians and British?"

"I'd sooner be with my own folks," said George.

The general cocked an eyebrow. "Who are your own folks?"

"You folks. My grampappy," George explained, "was a settler from Kerliny. I thought surely there'd be men

with you from Kerliny, an' I'd soldier with 'em for a spell." He looked questioningly at the general.

Wayne smiled a little. "You come directly from the Grand Glaize?"

"Yes, sir. Left my mammy five days ago."

Surprised, Wayne asked: "You said your mammy?"

George nodded.

"She knew you came?"

"Law, yes; cried a spell, but she was right keen I should go."

Wayne looked at him sharply: "Your mother must be a brave woman, son."

George grinned enthusiastically. "She sho' is, general! Why I mind the time when we first moved down to the Glaize; the Indians'ld come snoopin' around the cabin an' she'd shoo 'em off with a stick. I was skeered of 'em then."

General Wayne took out his pipe and chewed thoughtfully at the stem. "How many Indians would you say there were up there?"

"Heaps more'n I ever see anywheres else," said George. "Their villages run 'most all the way to the British fort up past the rapids."

"The British fort?" asked Wayne. "How long has it been there?"

"They built it a while back," George answered.

Wayne cursed.

George listened in admiration.

"Sho', general, sir, you take on like you was surprised! The British been he'pin' the Indians right an' left, atellin' 'em, 'the Ohio country is your'n now an' we'll side in with you to keep it! Don't you go lettin' the rebels chase you offen it.' That's what they tell 'em, but all the time they aim to keep it for theirselves.

Now I," he ended confidentially, " 'ld jist as soon our folks had it as them."

Wayne said dryly: "Would you, boy? Well, so would I." He was silent for a space. Then he inquired: "You want to soldier in the Legion?"

"Be right glad to!" George affirmed.

"Good!" said Wayne and called to the officer of the day: "Take him away, lieutenant, and keep him in the guard-house till morning. I may want to talk to him again."

George walked out beside the lieutenant, a little gloomy at this mention of the guard-house. He hadn't liked the appearance of it when he had gone stumbling in there in search of General Wayne; he liked it less now that he knew he would have to spend the night there. Moreover, he had already discovered that these people, his own though they might be, were a little curious in their behavior and he wondered whether General Wayne, in sending him to the guard-house, was not making a prisoner of him. Suspiciously he asked the officer: "Why air they asendin' me to the guard-house?"

"So you can draw your rations."

"Why do I have to draw rations?"

The officer looked at him wonderingly. "Why so's you kin eat, I reckon."

That satisfied George and he went ahead without further questioning.

There were candles lighted in the guard-house and the soldiers of the two off-watches sprawled about on the floor and on the benches as George followed the officer inside. For a while there was quiet, but after the men had again grown accustomed to the officer's presence they began talking:

"Heered tell we're gonta move right soon now," twanged a lanky private.

"Move! We'll move when Hell freezes over! Lemme tell you, we're astayin' right where we air!"

"Now," put in a quiet voice, "Sarkey's right an' you're wrong. I overheered ol' Horsemeat say yistiddy that we was only awaitin' fur Gineral Scott to come up with some boys from Kaintuck an' soon's he come we'd move."

"Well I," came a voice and there was the sound of a flat hand slapping flesh, "I'm ararin'; stay here much longer an' these damn mosquiters won't leave nothin' for the Injuns to chaw at."

Young George listened, edging nearer. The talk was somehow familiar, as if he had heard it years ago and had forgotten all but the pitch of the voices. There was a kinship about it; and drawing nearer to a youth a little older than himself he said: "Indians don't eat folks any more, least not any I ever seen."

The stocky youth whom he addressed regarded him gravely enough, but there was a general hoot from the others.

"Yah! ye hear that young catamount!"

"He shore talks like he knowed the Injuns!"

"Bet he cut his eye-teeth chawin' b'ars!"

"Season yourselves!" the officer of the day called sternly and the talk was lowered to a stealthy mutter.

Unable to decide whether he should rightly take offense or whether he should consider himself as being more closely one of them, George subsided. From time to time one of the men would look at him and grimace prodigiously. He sat by himself, smelling the odor of meat and vegetables that came in on the evening breeze.

A non-commissioned officer called into the doorway: "Lively for the pot!"

The men began scrambling forward. Rattling pans, they hurried out the door. George stood up indecisively, then sat down again.

"Here, buckskin," the sergeant reached under one of the benches and drew forth a pan and a spoon which he gave him. "Use your laigs afore they scrape the bottom clean outen the kettle."

George hurried out and joined a restless line which led to a great kettle standing over a bed of glowing coals. Up ahead an iron dipper splashed in and out, in and out as a bare armed cook ladled the chunks of meat and vegetables into the pans held expectantly by the guards.

Returning, he sat on the end of one of the benches and ate the thin stew while the other occupants of the dim room, having cleaned their plates, talked enviously of the game which they had smelled from the scout's cabin:

"Venison it was, an' like as not a turkey throwed in besides."

"Yah, them scouts go out to look for Injuns, but if you ast me I'd say they took a heap more pains to look for game!"

"Sho'! an' wouldn't you if you had the chanct!"

A scout, thought George; what wouldn't he give to be one! Roaming wild and yet in touch with the main body of the troops, guiding their approach, keeping alert for an ambush! That, he felt, was the job to have: to lead that bright flag which had been flying from the pole when he first sighted the fort.

Night came and the new watch replaced the old. One by one the candles were extinguished and the men lay

down to sleep. George stretched out on the ground at the far corner of the room, listening to the sharp whine of the mosquitoes and the steady snoring of a soldier. He felt a little lost and lonely, but on the edge of finding his own place in the Legion's scheme of organization. They were his own people; he was sure of that from the way they talked and from their loose, striding movements. At last he slept, his mind occupied with the remembrance that General Wayne had said he might send for him in the morning.

Another hot day came. George awoke to the sound of soldiers' voices talking over the night's experiences while walking their posts in the chain guard which encircled the fort.

"Laws," one of the men was saying, "I could ha' swore I heerd him fall when I let loose! Sure you didn't see nothin' movin' out there in the tall grass or hear an Injun groan?"

"Bet it waren't an Injun nohow, bet you shot at that ol' stump betwixt number three post an' the no'th blockhouse!"

They wrangled on, thoughtfully considering every angle there could be to the subject of whether an Indian had been shot during the night. But this time George kept silent, having discovered that unsought information from a stranger went none too well with these soldiers.

The day brightened toward noon, but no word came from General Wayne. George remained in the guardhouse until the new watch relieved the old late in the afternoon. He grew restless and uneasy; this apprehension was increased when he heard the relieving officer ask the lieutenant: "Is that man back there a prisoner?"

The lieutenant answered: "The commanding officer ordered him to be held here until further instructions."

That reply was none too reassuring, George felt. And upon that came the vivid sensation of himself completely surrounded and at the mercy of some thousands of soldiers. Why, they could do whatever they liked with him! They could keep him under guard indefinitely or they could kill him outright! And thinking of his mother he wished he had not come. Nearly a week had gone by since he had left her; when he set out he had thought that he would be on his way back with Wayne's troops by that time. He spent a miserable night and talked to nobody.

But on the next day the camp was pervaded by a feeling of excitement. An advance cavalry detachment had been sighted by an outpost and the word had swiftly travelled to the fort. Inside the guard-house the officer of the day busily inspected the soldiers' equipment, telling one man, "Varnish that stock," and another, "Scrape the leavin's of your last six meals offen your shirt; you're a disgrace to the Legion!"

The members of the guard fell to work, speculating as they rubbed and polished:

"Now that'll be ol' Scott an' his cavalry from Kaintuck."

"Scott your ragged ol' nightdrawers! A few head of stock don't make a cavl'ry."

"Hop sprightly," counselled the sergeant. "They're liable to turn us out now any minute!"

"Is it Scott comin', sargint?"

"I'd sho' admire to see them mounting boys astraddlin' horses!"

A soldier, running up the street to the guard-house,

shouted in the door: "Lieutenant says 'git ready to pay yore respecks to Ginral Scott!' "

The guard began to assemble near the entrance and the lieutenant himself appeared. "Come out now," he ordered, "and try to keep your musket barrels from gougin' each others' eyes out!"

The men stampeded through the door.

George walked forward through the deserted guardhouse and from the threshold looked down the street toward the gate. Out in front the watch was dressed in two ranks and farther down soldiers were running back and forth from one cabin to another, making visible efforts to get into uniform or under cover in short time. As George looked he saw a trio of horsemen entering the fort, a man on a deep-chested bay riding a little in advance of the others. The three in advance were followed by a procession that seemed endless.

When the man in front came nearer the guard opened ranks and presented arms. George saw him clearly for a moment: a tired, leathery face in which were set flat, light eyes, and a small nose that curved a little; he rode slumped down in his saddle and his scabbard slapped against the bay's plump belly. Then George turned to look farther along the line at the sweating riders who followed on lathered horses. They were lean, hard-faced volunteers from the rolling country of Kentucky, sixteen hundred pioneers and their sons who had more willingness than experience when it came to war. They clattered past, many in buckskin breeches and linen shirts, with their scabbards rattling and their lips set in a dogged grin, almost to a man.

General Scott took the guard's salute with a whipped-out sabre that flashed in the sunlight; and the line that followed grew rigid for a moment.

Open-mouthed, George watched them filing past toward the headquarters of General Wayne. He had never seen so many mounted soldiers before. He thrilled, feeling himself a part of them. "My own folks too," he muttered with solemn wonder.

Finally as the last mare's tail swished by the guard closed ranks and stood outside for a moment exchanging loud comment:

"Well lookit the volunteer calv'ry!"

"Hain't never seen a sight like that in my born days!"

"Don't them boys look hungry though; I bet they jined for the rations!"

"But Gemini they got fine mares!"

They laughed, jested and stared in high excitement. For now, with the arrival of more troops, it seemed incredible that they would remain any longer in Fort Greenville, and of this they were glad, having spent a long winter, a spring and the greater part of a summer there.

"Son, I reckon we'll be a vyagin' now," exclaimed a long, morose-looking private and snapped his fingers until they cracked like castanets.

Another said jubilantly: "I saved my daily noggin o' rum three days hand runnin' fur a time like this an' who says I cain't down 'er at a gulp. Gallopin' guns, won't we sashaiate now!"

George watched them wistfully as they crowded back into the guard-house. They were happy in knowing where they were going and how they stood with the world. But as for himself he had no such assurance. Since he had come there life had grown more hazardous than he had ever known it. Not that death was any nearer, but because he had felt himself under the

unaccustomed pressure of the military manner. There was no telling what General Wayne would have done with him. It was just as it had been when he came into the fort: when he had been looking for the commander-in-chief and had been sent to the guard-house.

Noon came and the officer of the day arrived, wiping the back of his hand over his mouth. Looking about the room he said: "Directly after mess the first guard will pack up their belongin's for the march; after the first guard has finished the second guard will do likewise!" He wiped his mouth again and added: "An' there's a double ration of rum for the guard this day!"

"Whoopee!"

"Hi-yih!"

"Sho' 'nuff, leftenant, sir?"

"How come? We goin' vyagin?"

The lieutenant grinned. "Boys, it's us an' the Indians directly!"

"A'mighty Gemini, won't I tan me a redskin!"

There was a long shout. "Hush!" ordered the lieutenant and went out.

George waited gloomily, hating the soldiers for their laughter. If only he knew what was to become of him; if only—he almost wished—he hadn't left the Grand Glaize to come journeying down here! Penned up in a guard-house like a prisoner! His imagination began to work furiously.

Late in the afternoon an orderly came swaggering in the door and stared impudently about the dim guard-room. "Where's the officer of the day?"

"What you want of him?" asked the sergeant, "I'm enough officer of the day for you skullduggerin' orderlies."

"Well," the orderly spat, conceding, "mebbe so. You got a feller in here by the name of McDermott?"

George caught his breath and listened sharply.

The sergeant jerked his thumb over his shoulder, "Back there. What do you want of *him?*"

The orderly held up a piece of paper: "Order from the commanding officer for him to report for duty with the scouts."

"Le's see," the sergeant reached for the paper and read it, "looks genuwine," he admitted. "McDermott!" he called, "hyah, buckskin!"

But George was already moving and as he passed the waiting guardsmen one of them said with wonder: "Now think o' that! That quiet little feller's agoin' to be a scout an' git his belly full o' venison an' Injun fightin' every day an twicet on Sunday!"

XIX

WITH one troop of cavalry moving southeast toward Sandusky, another going northward toward Kekinoggay, the Miami capital, and a body of scouts in front, the main army got under way in the hot, last days of July, their destination being the Miami villages near the Grand Glaize. The two commands of cavalry heading at tangents were feints used by General Wayne to draw the confederate tribes' attention from his main objective; the business of guarding the army against surprise and of keeping the commander-in-chief informed as to what lay ahead fell to the scouts.

It was as a scout that young George McDermott set forth. But his duty during those first days was not to look for Indians, but to discover water on the line of march that the troops could drink. There were in back of him about three thousand men, regulars, volunteers, cavalrymen, infantrymen, pioneers, and their supplies, and they moved with a sluggishness that made fifteen miles a day a good march. A dull, sickening heat lasted throughout the days and into the nights. Over this rolling, heavily forested country water lay stagnant in depressions which were decorated with long-stemmed ferns and moss where turtles and bullfrogs were continually plumping from favored logs down into the green scum. Traversing this ground at the head of an army, George was soon aware, was not like returning over it alone. Back of him the long line of troops coiled and uncoiled; wagons stuck fast and had to be pried out of the ruts which their wheels had made; the army sweated and spat and swore and kept on going.

On the first night the Legion encamped at Stillwater creek, twelve miles north of Fort Greenville; by the second afternoon they were a mile in advance of Fort Recovery. On the third morning the pioneers took the lead, cutting a road for eleven miles with the army toiling after them. That night they camped among the beeches near the edge of a great swamp. There it was that they first made out the tracks of Indian runners going northward.

These footprints were found by Captain Wells, chief of Wayne's scouts on the expedition; and young George, who had been with Wells that afternoon, stood near by when they were reported. The officer in charge of the pioneers and Lieutenant Harrison, one of Wayne's aides, were talking to the commanding general when the two scouts came up.

"Well," said Wayne testily when the report was given him, "we must expect to find Indians in Indian country." Briefly he told Lieutenant Harrison, "Recollect that the guard is doubled to-night," then turned to the officer from the pioneers to whom he had been speaking earlier. "If we can't cross the swamp without a bridge, then build one—conscript as many volunteers as you need; I've occasion of my own for the regulars."

For two days the army remained in the same encampment. A bridge had to be constructed across the swamp and a road cut through from the north side to the St. Mary's River by the pioneers. Young George and May, another of the scouts, searched for water, but none was to be found in sufficient quantity for the troops within twelve miles. Stacking their arms, half the army labored to pile up a ridge of loose mud and felled logs through the swamp so that the army might

not founder. And beyond the swamp two companies of pioneers under heavy guard cut out a road to the St. Mary's. In water up to their knees and with their tongues thick with thirst, the soldiers cursed and jested:

"Purtiest country I ever see; might' near fit fur a snake to live in!"

"God amighty, if I ever git back to my cabin an' 'at ol' houn' dog o' mine I'll cut down every sojer that gits within hollerin' distance!"

"Buckskin," drawled a lanky regular, "speak with respect when you say 'sojer' or you an' me'll go to tanglin'."

"Tell 'em, catamount! tell 'em!"

But at last the long day ended and before the sunrise of the next the army was on the march over the soft road through the swamp and the cleared trail that led to the bank of the St. Mary's. They arrived without mishap in the broad afternoon and pitched their camp in the tall grass that grew beside the stream which at that point had a width of about fifty yards. A moment after ranks were broken the soldiers ran for the water, removing their clothes and plunging in.

Seeing General Wayne standing by the bank, one of the volunteers shouted: "Peel off that jacket, gin'ral, an' clamber in! Sho' feels good!"

It was with astonishment that George heard Wayne reply quickly, "That I will!" and saw him strip off his uniform and wade down to the current.

For three days the army remained by the St. Mary's, Wayne's purpose being to erect a garrison, and to add to the provisions for the troops. On the first day of their stay the quartermasters were sent out and New-

man, one of the deputies, did not return that night. The scouts were called for.

Hickman, May, and young George were the three sent out by Captain Wells. The two veterans spoke warmly of this Newman's stupidity, but George remained silent. The men separated, thrusting about on the north bank of the river in search of tracks. Not until the following morning were they found; young George, going several miles north along an old Indian trail, discovered a ring of moccasin prints surrounding the deep marks made by horses' hoofs. A little farther on the tracks of boots were added to the others. Taken together they were enough for him to know that Newman had been unexpectedly confronted, dragged down from his mount, and hurried northward.

Returning with his report, he arrived at headquarters to find that the two troops of cavalry, sent out from Greenville as feints to the right and left, had come back. Inside the garrison before Wayne's quarters a soldier was saying: "Ain't seen hide nor hair on 'em; 'pears like they skipped for good." George passed on and saw Lieutenant Harrison, to whom he gave his information: "Looks like this Mister Newman fell in with four Indians, leftenant, an' they took his horse an' yanked him after it."

Harrison nodded gloomily: "Play hell surprising the Indians after this, unless that rascally deputy can hold his tongue."

The soldier who had seen no Indians asked hurriedly: "What's that; sho' they cain't be that clost to us."

George heard Lieutenant Harrison answer sharply: "You men better fill up with another week's rations, because the general'll send you out again as soon as he knows this."

George went back to the scouts' encampment where Captain Wells sat smoking and whittling shrewdly at a hickory stick. Wells was of medium height, wiry, indeterminately colored, and had pale, roving eyes. Like May and the Miller brothers of Wayne's scouts, he had lived much among the Indians, but had escaped from them. He was not incapable of gratitude, for it was known that on a previous expedition into the Indian country that summer he had unexpectedly encountered the old Indian and his squaw by whom Wells had been taken care of when he lived among them and had asked his companions that they be spared rather than murdered.

As young George sat there Wells was joined by the two Miller brothers. Both of them were broad-faced and stolid and their hair was like bleached flax. Henry had been with the army for more than a year, but Christopher had come to the scouts only two months ago, having been retaken from the Shawanese by his brother Henry and Captain Wells, literally at the point of a musket. Brought back to Fort Greenville, he had been sullen and resentful of his capture from the Shawanese, in which tribe he had been formally adopted; but after being ordered into the guard-house for a month by General Wayne and because of the pleading of his brother and Wells, he had agreed that if Wayne released him he would take service with the scouts and never return to the Indians.

"Hearn tell we move to-morrow," said Henry Miller and sat down slowly.

Wells put up his hickory stick and squinted along it. "Them ears o' yourn air right big, Henry."

"Hain't no bigger'n yore mouth, Cap'n Wells," Christopher defended his brother.

Young George edged away. These three men were always ridiculing each other. He didn't like it. It made him uneasy and he wondered how long it would be before he was the subject of their sour jests. His cheeks burned at the thought of it and unconsciously he clenched his fists.

The day passed and the army took up the line of march on the following morning, a ten-mile journey through rich, well-timbered land, but with only stale water for drinking, and that had to be got by digging holes in which it would then bubble up out of the bogs and settle. The next march was made through the rain and when camp was pitched Mahaffey, one of the scouts from Kentucky, brought in the report that he had discovered the tracks of twenty Indians, being very exact as to the number.

Young George, whose day had been uneventful, was listening to Mahaffey tell again of his discovery and hearing the various judicial comments when an orderly from headquarters appeared and called out: "Where's McDermott?"

George stood up, a little nervous at having been singled out among these men.

"General Wayne wants you in his tent directly."

"Reckon one o' you boys," began Wells slyly, "better foller along an' ketch him when he gits throwed out."

Henry Miller laughed.

In his tent, General Wayne sat smoking thoughtfully and did not look up as George entered. He had a rough map and a note-book before him. A moment later he raised his eyes to George:

"Up in your part of the country now, ain't we, son?"

George breathed in and announced with despera-

tion: "We keep on north we'll strike the Glaize about ten miles from here."

He was not sure of the general's humor and what Captain Wells had said made him nervous.

"Indian villages along the river straight north?"

George nodded.

"Um," said Wayne, with anticipatory relish, "have some green corn to-morrow night." He called back toward the rear of the tent where Lieutenant Harrison, then acting major, sat writing: "Hear that, Harrison? Green corn to-morrow!" To George he spoke again: "And how far up the Glaize is it to the Maumee?"

George answered: "I'd say ten miles up the Glaize from the Delaware town till you hit the Maumee."

"Know it well, do you?"

"Ought to," said George, now completely at ease. He grew emboldened enough to remark, "They's more corn up there'n the whole army kin eat. Got a right good patch of it myself."

"Well now," said Wayne, "you talk like a real settler; talks like he had a sharp nose for the land, don't he, Harrison?"

"Sir," replied Harrison busy at his task, "it appears like he does."

George flushed and looked at Wayne questioningly.

"Tell Captain Wells to report to me," said the general and began marking his map again.

"Yes sir," said George, and understood that the interview was over.

Dawn of the next morning found the army on the move, their object being to reach the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers in time to pitch camp that night. The advance was led by the scouts, Captain

Wells and Henry Miller bearing to the right, McClellan, May, and Christopher Miller to the left, while George and Mahaffey guided the vanguard straight for the Delaware village on the river.

They proceeded slowly, the vanguard with muskets primed and carried at the trail as they neared the Indian neighborhood. But caution on this occasion was not needed. Young George and Mahaffey, having come to the end of the path, where it opened on the margin between the Auglaize and the forest, lay watching through the brilliant underbrush, but could discover no sign of life. Ahead of them was nothing but the empty bark houses, the fields of darkly tasselled corn and the northward-flowing river.

The two scouts looked at one another for some moments. Then Mahaffey said: "I'll slip back and tell 'em."

George lifted his head and smiled a little. If Mahaffey wanted to be the one to go, let him go; he for his part had no fear of a deserted Indian village. "I'll be down by the ford," he answered.

Slowly the army wound up to the river bank, the cavalry and infantry, pioneers, horses, cattle and wagons, ammunition carts and supplies. They were dirty, hungry, and many were sallowed and shaking from the ague and dysentery which had been brought on by the low, damp wilderness and the stagnant water. But as they came to the clear river and crossed the ford it seemed to them that they were approaching their journey's end and that a breathing space had been found in the tangled forest. They sang out while marching to the ford:

"Green cawn!"

"Prime roastin' ears!"

"Buckskins, I'll 'low we'll eat some now."

And General Wayne sat his horse on the farther bank, listening and smiling and looking ahead to the conflict that was to come.

The junction of the two rivers was reached late that afternoon and after an hour's reconnoitring with his staff, General Wayne chose his camp on the strip of land that separated the Maumee and the Auglaize and came to a point where their currents met. It was a high piece of wooded ground, protected by water on three sides and not more than forty miles from where the British fort, so Wayne had been told, lay at the foot of the Maumee rapids.

As the army followed to the point and were dismissed from ranks the soldiers unslung their equipment, dropped their muskets, and sprawled in the moss and tall grass. Officers walked about gathering details for guard-duty and foraging parties into the fields and gardens that grew along the river banks. Here too, the Indian villages were deserted, still as if a plague had struck them.

At the extreme point General Scott and Wayne were talking, their horses held by their orderlies. Wayne was sweeping his arm in various directions and General Scott was solemnly nodding his head. From their discussion enough was heard by the soldiers nearest them for the word to be whispered down the line that this would be their camp for several days and that a fort would soon be erected. To have a strong base that far into the enemy country was necessary; and it was important that the weary soldiers and animals be given a time of rest.

Young George sat thoughtfully alone by the Maumee shore, staring down the river in the direction of his own

fields and cabin. It had been three weeks now since he had left his mother, and in those days there was no telling what had passed up here by the Grand Glaize. The place itself seemed so changed, ominously emptied of all the braves and squaws and children whom he was accustomed to see sitting before the bark cabins and tents, fishing and appearing through the forest with their game. He wondered about his father, knowing that he would be with the Indians wherever they were, wondered whether his mother had joined him despite her dislike for the Indians. He sat there, his brown face scowling anxiously, asking himself how he would be enabled to get away from the encampment and visit the cabin where, he hoped, his mother still remained. And as he thought of the four miles' distance between the point and the cabin and of the Indians who might be concealed within that stretch of forest he grew afraid. For now, for the first time, he realized clearly that he had become an enemy of theirs. Up to this moment he had not considered that; his object had been to get to his own folk, who, he knew, were headed into the northwestern Ohio country. But with the army there in the Indian territory that he had always known as belonging to the Indians and with his own duties as a scout to be performed, he knew what his position was. But he did not relish it.

As he sat there a voice sang out from the top of the bank, "McDermott!" Turning, he saw Mahaffey and climbed up the steep slope to join him.

"Wells wants us," said Mahaffey. "I expect we're agoin' on the trail agin'—not the Legion, jist the scouts."

Young George nodded blankly and walked beside Mahaffey, threading among the groups of sprawling

soldiers who lay in close contact over the ground. They came upon the scouts in the space allotted to the Legion cavalry. May sat on the tongue of the supply wagon; Wells stood near by, testing the edge of his hunting-knife on the ball of his thumb, and the two Millers and McClellan were examining a roan mare whose shoulder had been worn raw by the saddle.

Wells' pale eyes darted enigmatically upward through sandy lashes at the arrival of young George and Mahaffey. He said: "Why the hell can't you stay around! We should of been off an hour ago."

George stared at Wells for some time without answering, turned as the horses were led out, and mounted the mare that he was to ride. He got into the saddle slowly, his heart pounding downward. Why they were going out Wells had not informed the company, but it was reasonably supposed by all of them that they were to reconnoitre among the Indians and discover as much as possible of their strength, position, and movements.

They crossed the river and struck the southeast trail that ran in the general direction of the Muskingum's source. The dusk was growing deeper and, riding at the rear of the party, George looked anxiously ahead, wishing that he could spur up into the middle or in front; there he would feel safer and more sure of himself. For suddenly this dark, familiar forest had become alarming and he did not like the man who was leading. There was a spirit about Wells to which he could not accustom himself; it came from the man's sly eyes, his laughter at the discomfiture of others, and his cocksure, secretive way of giving orders.

They had gone, George thought it likely, about twenty miles through the darkness before Wells brought them to a halt. The power of night made them

talk in lowered voices. Dismounting, May cursed softly at a nickering mare. After making the horses fast, they lay down and slept, all but Mahaffey, who had been chosen to stand guard during what remained of the night.

In the morning they built a fire and broke out the dried meat and flour which were their provisions. Henry Miller fetched water in an iron pot and Wells was about to boil the meal when Mahaffey said, "Hold on! Let's eat like white folks," and going to a basswood tree that stood near by he cut off and peeled a limb which he brought back to the fire. "Like this," he said, and moving in front of Wells he made a paste of the flour and water and began moulding it about the smooth, white wood. He held it over the fire while the men watched, unable to decide whether to risk having the meal spoiled by this unaccustomed means of preparing it.

The bread browned well. After some time Mahaffey took it from above the flames and broke off the baked pieces from about the stick, passing them around.

Wells chewed a mouthful and announced: "Hain't no good fixed thataway."

Mahaffey sat back on his heels and regarded him coldly. "The hell it ain't! I larn't that way of makin' bread from the best woodsman in Kaintuck."

When breakfast was finished they rode forth again, silently as half a dozen horsemen could travel. The tracks of Indians were heavy on the trail and toward noon Wells halted again. It was at a spot where the underbrush was exceptionally thick and as the men alighted from their saddles their officer observed: "General said to fetch him a prisoner; reckon we might wait right here."

Leading their horses farther into the wood, the men

returned and arranged themselves in concealment along the trail. Young George cuddled the stock of his musket against his side and peered out among the leaves of a low bush. Next to him was Mahaffey and beyond Mahaffey lay McClellan; the others were hidden on the north side of the path.

As they waited, young George fancied the host of Indians that would come running past, armed with musket and tomahawk; the swift rising of the scouts and the lusty shout that would be a prelude to the combat. He could see the struggles as clearly as though they were taking place before him: the white and red men pairing off and battling to the death, leaving but one lone Indian alive to take back to General Wayne.

Time passed and the scouts waited in silence. Perhaps an hour after they had concealed themselves there was the sound of a horse moving slowly toward them from the northwest. They watched, with muskets tightly gripped and eyes set keenly.

A scrawny bay, his head hung low and no bridle or bit to raise it, came ambling slowly forward; and on the bony ridge that was his back sat a wrinkled Indian and his squaw. The man looked unsuspectingly ahead, his face stoically set to endure the pressure of the squaw's arms gripped about his middle.

As the pair came nearer Captain Wells sprang from cover and grasped the horse's mane with one hand while with the other he jerked vigorously at the Indian. A look of surprise and fear tightened up the old, wrinkled countenance, then both man and squaw went toppling into the underbrush that grew beside the trail. The frightened horse snorted and swung its head, but was caught by McClellan. Surrounded by the scouts, the old man lay listening in bewilderment to a rapid speech

delivered in Shawanese by Captain Wells which he interspersed with English curses and epithets. Where was the Indian camp; where were the old Indian and his squaw going; how many people were there; where had they come from, and the like were what Wells asked. The Indian replied with apparent willingness, at times shaking his head as if mystified by the question.

Having discovered what he wanted to know Captain Wells ordered the prisoners back on the horse and helped bind them. Young George stood passively by, looking at Wells, who remarked to McClellan with satisfaction: "Well, we got what we come after." From this George believed that they would turn back over the trail to the Grand Glaize, but he was mistaken.

Captain Wells had discovered that a Shawanese village lay a few miles distant and though he had taken a prisoner for Wayne to interrogate he decided to gain further information by leading the scouts into the village and posing as Canadian rangers whom the Indians were expecting from Detroit. With the Indians secured, he led the way into the depths of the wood to wait for darkness.

They remained hidden until evening, then leaving Mahaffey to guard the captives they took to the trail again, continuing slowly for several miles until they saw a light through the woods where the Indians had made a fire. Wells halted to give the instructions: "You boys keep your eyes on me; we'll talk till they git cantankerous an' then we'll give 'em the hot lead. But don't shoot afore I hold up my hand."

"No use shootin' nohow," objected May.

"Then git on back," Wells told him contemptuously and rode his horse forward.

Grumbling a little, May followed.

The fire, they saw as they drew nearer, was large and a group of perhaps twenty braves surrounded it. Riding into the camp with his musket over the pommel of his saddle, Wells held up his hand and addressed them in Shawanese. Young George heard him say: "Good evening, my friends, we greet you in the name of the white father beyond the lake."

A squat, broad-shouldered Indian arose, smiling gravely. "You are welcome."

"Ai," said the Indians about the fire, speaking almost in chorus, "ai, our friends from the father beyond the lake are welcome."

"We have come to fight the Long Knives. When does the battle begin?" went on Wells.

The spokesman shook his head. "The chief warrior of the Long Knives moves everywhere. Where he will strike we do not know, but our braves wait by the rapids where the father beyond the lake has built a fort to support his dark children."

Wells's eyes roved quickly to right and left and his thin lips curved as he looked at McClellan whose mare was beside him. "Where is the general of the Long Knives now, and how is it that he moves everywhere?"

A round-headed Indian with gloomy eyes muttered caution under his breath. The spokesman was talking too much!

Wells heard the warning whisper and his hand went up, then slapped down on the stock of his musket. The Millers, May, McClellan and Wells fired almost simultaneously into the astounded faces of the Indians. There was a cry and they began scrambling for their weapons which lay close at hand.

Young George sat powerless in his saddle. The firing rattled at his ears; he saw the Indians before him, saw

their faces darken with anger and heard their bellows of rage, but he could not move. Though the warning words of Wells were still in his mind, the attack was so unexpected that it benumbed him. One moment they had been talking in friendly fashion; the next moment those speakers were squirming on the ground. A point-blank volley of shot blazed past from the barrels of the Indian guns.

"Wheel!" Wells shouted.

But there was no need of a command. The mounts of both Wells and McClellan had reared and now plunged toward the rear. George's horse, jostled by Wells and McClellan going past, turned of its own accord and galloped. The Millers and May came thudding in the rear, all riding swiftly for the darkness.

A second volley of shot whirred past. Ahead of him George heard Wells's musket go clattering on the ground and there was a cry from McClellan as if he had screamed through set teeth. Back of him there was a shout from May:

"Great God, wait!"

And May's horse galloped through the night without a rider.

They were still within sight of the camp-fire when Wells's horse went down on its knees and sprawled, threshing in the underbrush. George drew up sharply, his own mare within an inch of stumbling. From the ground in back of him came Wells's voice, pleading: "Don't leave me!"

For an instant George was irresolute. It was not that the Indians' lead was pouring through the shadows about him, it was because he detested Wells. Then he got out of his saddle and helped to hoist Wells into it.

In the saddle again, Wells sent George's mare after

the pounding hoofs of the lead norse ridden by McClellan.

George stiffened as if he had been slapped across the face. Back of him the Indians were running after May. They would be upon him shortly. Tightening his lips, he sprinted forward.

He ran until his heart and lungs were like great engines that threatened to burst his breast. Once he sprawled, his face and hands and knees skidding along the ground, but he was up again and racing forward almost as soon as he had stopped.

Of a sudden a shadow darker than the night appeared before him and a voice shouted: "Hey!" He swerved quickly into the underbrush.

The call was repeated and this time he recognized the voice of Mahaffey. Clambering out of the bushes, he hurried forward.

"Who's that!" Mahaffey queried sharply.

"It's me, McDermott!"

"H'ist up behind me an' we'll drive these critters off afore we're took ourselves." As George settled his legs about the mare's broad haunches he felt as if he had expended his last breath.

As they went ahead George could no longer hear either shots or hoofbeats behind him. Holding the long rope which bound the Indian pair, Mahaffey jogged along toward the Maumee.

Late that night they struck the river some miles north of the Grand Glaize and proceeded southward toward Wayne's camp. Morning brought them opposite the McDermott camp and George slipped down, saying to Mahaffey: "You go on; I've got to cross over here." Without waiting for a reply he began to strip off his heavier clothes to swim the river.

Mahaffey said quietly: "I'll wait fur you."

George waded into the mud and struck out, swimming the few hundred yards to the farther bank. There was no smoke from the cabin chimney and the door was closed; he had noticed that the moment he saw the cabin, but as it was early he thought that his mother might have let the fire go out the night before and not have rekindled it yet that morning. As he waded up to the west bank and entered the corn-field he shouted. But there was no answer. He opened the door and discovered the cabin to be empty.

He went back slowly, swimming over to where Mahaffey waited. Maybe, he thought, his father had come for her and his mother had gone with him in spite of her disgust for the Indians. It was necessary for him to believe that wherever she had gone she was being protected; and telling himself that she doubtless was with his father he quieted his mind.

But his mother had not gone with his father. Riding slowly up to the point with Mahaffey and the Indian family and crossing over the river to the camp, hers was one of the first faces he saw looking down from the bank above which blockhouses were being made. She was standing among a number of soldiers and officers; having singled him out while he was still on the opposite shore, her eyes watched him eagerly. She waved her hand and he awkwardly lifted his own, feeling bashful that he should be meeting her among all these people. How she had happened to come to the camp puzzled him; it was not like her. Coming nearer he grinned at her anxious eyes.

"You po' boy!" she exclaimed and stood on her toes to kiss him. "You look a sight, but I knowed you wouldn't let the varmints take you."

Back of him Mahaffey was herding the two bound and dead-tired Indians toward General Wayne and through the throng that had gathered he saw the two Millers. They were calling to him, but assuming a careless tone, he answered his mother: "Not in no foot-race; ain't I outrun every Miami in the bottoms?" Then he heard Henry Miller asking if he had seen Wells and McClellan since the escape, and after listening a while he discovered that both men had been so badly wounded they had been forced from their mounts and had crawled under cover while the Miller brothers rode on to the fort for aid, and that a surgeon and a guard of dragoons had been sent for them. May, it was believed, had been captured and would be put to death. But he didn't care a damn about McClellan and Wells, especially Wells, and taking his mother's arm he moved through the groups of soldiers to a cleared space near which a blockhouse was going up.

When they were alone she said to him: "I reckon you wonder how I come here?" and without waiting for him to inquire she went on: "Yesterday mornin' there come a knockin' on the door and I went to open it. Who should I see but a passel of soldiers and one of 'em said, 'Ma'am, it's the general's orders that all friendly white folks rest inside our fort.' 'What general you speakin' for?' I asked. They said, 'General Wayne.' An' I said, 'An' what if I don't come?' They told me, 'Then we'll be obliged to carry you 'cause it's the general's orders an' he's right smart about throwin' folks in jail if they don't do like he says.' "

George looked at her in amazement, then confessed: "I did study about it some." Though glad that his mother was safe, he was worried about the lonely cabin. It was strange, seeing the peaceful Ohio country

overrun with soldiers, the Indian villages deserted, and the fields trampled and plundered. He hoped his own crop would be safe.

His mother asked him: "What you been adoin'?"

"Scoutin'," he told her.

"Like you was last night?" Her eyes were anxious.

"Some like last night," he confessed, "but I won't go scoutin' no mo'." He had been thinking since morning that if he met the Indians again he would like to meet them fairly and not steal up on them out of the darkness. "I'll go for a soldier right in the ranks."

"The ranks?" she asked.

"When they all stand up togetherlike," he explained, "they call that the ranks."

She looked about her. "All these skinny-lookin' men in the ranks with them long knives to their guns?"

"Them's bay'nets. Claim they scare the Indians right sick. Jist seem like that much mo' to carry, I'd say."

"When you reckon you'll fight?" she queried.

"When the general says. Fort looks like he thought the Indians'ld come a swoopin' down on him, don't it?" And as he saw that that worried his mother he added: "But I reckon it's only he's takin' caution."

A voice from behind him called, "McDermott!" and a lanky lieutenant in a linen shirt and fringed breeches stood beckoning him.

"I'll go 'long now," said his mother, and returned to the blockhouse which had been given over to her.

"Want you," said the lieutenant, "to lead a squad of my boys foragin'."

George deliberated. "Looky here," he began gravely, "I'll go now if you'll let me jine your folks when they's a battle."

The lieutenant laughed. "There's naught to hinder you. But I reckon we'll have to find the battle first."

"Hain't there to be none?" asked George.

"Well," said the lieutenant, "I heered the general is sendin' out a flag."

Having been instructed by his friend, President Washington, to make all reasonable efforts toward peace with the Indians, and not to provoke the British unduly, General Wayne made a final effort toward an amicable treaty with the Indian confederacy. And on that he composed a long message to the Miamis, Shawanese, Delawares and Wyandots: "To each and every one of them; and to all other nations of Indians northwest of the Ohio whom it may concern: Brothers, be no longer deceived or led astray by the false promises and language of the bad white men at the foot of the rapids; they have neither the power nor the inclination to protect you. No longer shut your eyes to your true interest and happiness, nor your ears to this last overture of peace. But, in pity to your innocent women and children, come and prevent the further effusion of your blood. Let them experience the kindness of the United States of America, and the invaluable blessings of peace and tranquillity." And that this may be done, the hardy old general, still in his saddle a decade after the war of the Revolution, wrote on: "Let each and every hostile tribe of Indians appoint deputies to meet with the commander-in-chief without delay between the mouth of the Oglaize and the foot of the rapids of the Maumee in order to settle the preliminaries of a lasting peace."

This message written, General Wayne sent for Christopher Miller, the white man who had been retaken from the Shawanese after he had been adopted into

their tribe, and despatched him to his former brethren.

Miller left at about four o'clock that afternoon, the soldiers watching him as he went out the gate, shouting ribald advice at his departing back:

"Fetch us a fat young squaw there, ol' weasel face!"

"Don't let them Injuns git to chawin' on you, now!"

"Clip one o' them brothers o' your'n for me, hey, Miller?"

Thus they expressed their avid interest as the messenger went forth with the word, the answer to which would mean either war or peace to many thousands of people. The sun sank lower, throwing long shadows of the fort on the darkening surface of the Maumee; it was the end of another day's work on the incompleted fort.

On the eighth day the fort was completed. It stood with a blockhouse at each angle, and all of them connected by a firm line of pickets. Surrounding this was an earthen wall eight feet in thickness, below which another wall of logs and fagots ended at the top of a deep ditch in which a tall man could have stood with his arms upraised without being seen above the parapet. The ditch was fifteen feet wide and encircled the fort, except on the Grand Glaize side. There, the bank being steeper, an extra wall of fagots secured the main works from attack. Entrance to the fort was made by either of two gateways inside the trench, which was crossed at one gate by a foot-bridge, and at the other by a drawbridge, which men behind the pickets raised and lowered by means of pulleys.

It was a solid fort and not uncomfortable inside. There were doors and chimneys in the blockhouses, and room for officers' quarters, the stores of provisions and ammunition. It gave shelter and cooking facilities

better than average. A well had been dug between the ditch and the river, and passage to it from the fort was made safe, in case of attack, by two lines of converging pickets. To the west were sanitary vaults among the trees, and the adjacent forest afforded more fuel than was needed. As for the outer blockhouse walls, the one looking toward the Maumee and the other toward the Grand Glaize, there were port-holes where Wayne's small howitzers were mounted and slits for small-arms firing.

On the evening the work was finished General Wayne walked about on a tour of inspection accompanied by General Scott, commander of the volunteer cavalry from Kentucky. Wayne looked at the pickets, stepped down on the thick earthworks below, and walked along it toward the drawbridge, where he stood, his jaw grimly set, looking out over the quiet water toward the forest, deep with shadows. "I defy," he said to Scott as he thumped his fist into the palm of his hand, "I defy the English, the Indians, and all the devils in hell, part and parcel, to take this fort!"

General Scott, himself no stranger to tall talk, raised his head smartly and smoothed the wrinkles of his campaign jacket. "Well now, general, I declare if I wouldn't call it Fort Defiance."

Wayne squinted his eye at him and remarked with satisfaction: "Why, general, I named it that two days ago when I sent my report to the secretary of war."

The following morning the main body of the army took up the line of march down the river in the direction of the British fort, which lay at the foot of the rapids. They moved cautiously, the scouts in front, and by the second night they had gone nineteen miles from Fort Defiance. As they pitched camp that evening Gen-

eral Wayne was restless and irritable, and his aides and orderlies were kept running from his quarters to the picket lines in quest of information about Christopher Miller, who had been expected even before the march had been taken up. Soldiers could hear the general barking from his quarters: "The flag! Where in the devil is that flag I sent, and when is he coming back?"

The flag returned, with the confederacy's reply to Wayne's message, late that night. Hurried through by the pickets, he was brought to the general's quarters. By this time the soldiers were nearly as impatient as their commanding officer to know whether the long journey was to end in war or a treaty of peace.

They stood about in gossiping groups:

"Bet tomorrer's ration of the wet it's a fight we're agoin' into."

"Cain't fight if the Indians won't fight, I'll allow."

"I'll allow you're a loon an' you don't know Wayne."

" 'S right; he wouldn't haul us boys 'way up here an' then not give the Injuns a little seasonin', not the general."

They were still talking when the information contained in the message, by some strange underground current that makes military messages known generally almost as soon as they are known by the commanding officer, became the common knowledge of the camp:

"Ten days! Us wait ten days while they make up their minds whether to go to tanglin' with us or talk nice an' soft!"

"Ol' general'll give 'em ten days on their backsides!"

"I'm set—I'm set fur plain or fancy prancin', an' I'll ride 'em hard!"

"Hark to the catamount!"

Into this talk the commands of an officer penetrated: "Hold your jaws, you buckskins; we take the line of march at daybreak."

XX

THE camp was astir in the early dawn and by five o'clock tight-voiced sergeants were rousing sluggards from their blankets and forming their platoons. Everywhere among the soldiers there was a cool excitement. The spirit of recklessness and raillery which had been apparent the day before was gone; now the men looked out of harried eyes and stepped to their places in ranks submissively and with an economy of talk. They carefully inspected their flintlocks and the priming, while a few rubbed shirt-sleeves thoughtfully up and down the blades of their long, slender bayonets. In the growing light could be heard the whinnying of horses and the trampling of many boots through the underbrush. It was the morning of the attack, and they were going into it stripped to their lightest equipment.

By seven o'clock the ranks were organized and ready for the march. Earlier there had been a damp mist, but it was dispersing. Through the trees, where drops of dew on the leaves were opalescent in the sunlight, the men could see their comrades stretched far on either side. In front of the main body General Wayne and his staff, his aide, Major Harrison, and Generals Scott, Todd, and Barbee sat on quiet horses and again went over the battle order.

The units were joined in the standing order of the march. On the extreme right stood the Legion, facing northward, and with its flank covered by the rippling Maumee. Next to the Legion, on the left, was a brigade of mounted volunteers under General Todd; another brigade of Kentucky horsemen covered the rear under

command of General Barbee. In front of the Legion Major Price held in check a chosen battalion of horsemen which were to act as advance-guard.

There was no specific and detailed plan of battle. Major Price was instructed to keep sufficiently ahead of the main body so that by the time he met the enemy the troops would be able to prepare before coming upon them. The cavalry were to crash through, followed by an infantry charge with fixed bayonets. Further orders were left for the moment when the enemy had been engaged.

"Arms at the trail, forward . . ." The command came through the forest, repeated by a hundred voices. Slowly the Legion commenced its advance through the wooded ground that sloped down toward the river. On the right General Wilkinson shouted, "Forward!" and Colonel Hamtramck, commanding the Legion's left flank, echoed, "At the trail!" From the mounted ranks adjacent to the infantry's flanks and from the cavalry rear-guard came the scraping sound of sabres being drawn.

The entire body of troops moved warily ahead, following the mounted volunteers under Major Price, who was nearly half a mile to the front of the army.

Price's cavalry rode slowly through the tall grass of the rough terrane, the men bent forward, keeping a tight hand on the bridle-reins. Somewhere ahead of them in this unknown ground the Indians were drawn up for warfare, and the cavalrymen knew they would feel the enemy's bullets before they caught sight of them. They continued grimly, prepared for the shock of contact wherever and whenever it should come.

The sun came out more fully, rose above the forest,

and sent rays piercing through the brilliant foliage. Overhead there was a flutter of indignantly chattering birds, and on the earth the small game scurried for cover. Price's vanguard went slowly on, the underbrush breaking gently under the loitering hoofs of the horses. An hour passed, but the enemy were not to be seen.

The forest lay secretively about them. Every tree was a menace from which could be launched a ripping musket-ball. But there was nothing ahead but silence as another hour brought the day closer to noontide heat. Restlessness pervaded the cavalry. The men began to feel their tautened nerves, their stiff-set lips and wary eyes.

"God a'mighty, hain't we never——"

"Don't look like the varmints air around here nohow!"

"Hold your mouths!"

They talked brokenly and in low voices, and the sweat ran down their faces.

It was ten o'clock when unexpectedly the leading fringe of the advance riders reached an opening in the forest and saw before them a great stretch of fallen trees, tangled and sprawling as if they had been blown down by a tornado. Roots reared out of the ground with long, dark tendrils, and there were white, ragged stumps that thrust their splintered remains upward like jagged spikes. The first of the riders had barely paused when a terrific clatter of musketry sounded from the wood beyond the fallen timber, and the balls poured into them with a deadly whining.

A horse stood on its hind legs, its lips working spasmodically over long, white teeth. The rider tightened the bit and the animal went over and lay threshing

against a tree, with the man beneath its weight. Another bolted. A cavalryman cried out unintelligibly.

The second round of shot brought worse confusion. A lanky rider pointed to the tangled wood, and called out: "By God, we can't ride through there!" Already horsemen were wheeling their frightened mounts. A spur drove in a mare's flank; with head upflung she plunged recklessly back through the forest.

Major Price worked his blood-drained lips to call the cavalry to stand. The whisper passed unheard, and his gesture with his sword unheeded. He turned and galloped after them.

Ahead and to the right centre of the main body of the Legion marched a front guard of infantry under Captain Cook and Lieutenant Steele. It was their duty to keep within a reasonable distance of the cavalry vanguard, near enough so that they could closely follow into the attack and with their bayonets widen the swath in the enemy ranks cut by the sabres, giving the main guard time to deploy.

The advance of the vanguard being slow, the advance of the infantry guard was even slower. And at moments during the penetration of the forest through the long morning they were almost stationary, thus increasing the general fatigue of the march. In front of them they could see the rumps of the horses between the trees, and the riders with their sabres bared.

Though they had set forth vigilantly spirited that morning, the failure to meet the Indians as the day increased, and the knowledge that the cavalry moved between themselves and surprise made them relax more than they would otherwise have done. They talked and made wry jokes.

A soldier said: "Law, declare if it ain't 'most time to eat again!"

"I don't keer," began another in the front rank, "how long we stay up here long as this Injun green cawn holds out, an' the qua'te'master keeps on rationin' the wet."

"Now hain't that whiskey good! I'll swear ef it don't make yore innards feel right r'yal!"

They were talking when the noise of shot rattled out. A scattering of balls ripped through the foliage and among them.

They wavered a moment, but stood the shock.

Captain Cook shouted and they began to deploy, trailing their arms and staring anxiously ahead.

"Make hell hot for 'em," yelled somebody in a trembling falsetto, "you calv'ry sojers!"

But before the left flank had come up on the advancing line there was a crashing in the wood, and the disordered cavalry were upon them, the horses bolting and mad with fear, and the men doing little to hold them.

"They're acomin' arter us," shouted a cavalryman, and kept on going.

The left flank broke, massed up and faced about to flee.

Lieutenant Steele ran toward them, shaking his sword above his head and thundering: "Hold your ground! Damn it! Damn it! Hold your ground!"

The right flank gave way as the cavalry rode into it, knocking down Captain Cook. He rose to his knee and muttered: "Oh! the cowards; by God! the cowards!" He knelt there, watching his command in flight, half of them run down by the galloping cavalry, and the rest running in uncontrollable panic.

Indians were beginning to appear through the wood and by the bottom-land near the head of the Maumee rapids, armed with muskets, tomahawks, and war-clubs.

The main body of the Legion took up the march that morning in a column of fours, trailing their arms with fixed bayonets, and expecting momentarily to meet the enemy, which, it was said, were somewhere within the half-dozen miles that separated the soldiers' encampment from the British fort that the spies had discovered at the foot of the Maumee rapids. Nearly all of them were eager for the battle to take place, and hoped that it would be decisive. Many of them had been preparing for it during the last two years, when they had volunteered to serve under General Wayne at Legionsville, in June of 1792. But from that month to this they had been engaged by the Indians only once, and that was when they had been attacked under the walls of Fort Recovery, in June of 1794, less than two months ago.

Progress that morning was slower and more wearying than they had ever known it on a march, it seemed to them. Every hour as they tramped ahead there would come the command to halt and ground arms. And there they would stand, wondering what was taking place up in front to cause so many delays, calling, grumbling, and making up absurd explanations of why they were ordered to stop three and four times every hour.

Especially was this true of Captain Howell Lewis's company of light infantry, which advanced at the left centre of the body of the Legion, and had to traverse a rough, brambly and thickly wooded stretch nearly all of the way from Camp Deposit.

Marching at their right flank was Captain Lewis, his mild, light-blue eyes smiling a little at the long, monotonous complaints of the soldiers.

"Tan my britches, but this hain't no Legion; hit's a passel o' turtle varmints!"

"Sho', ain't nobody said it *was* a Legion o' men, it's——"

"I swear," cut in another, "a mortal needs two pairs o' laigs a sight more'n he needs a musket to fight these critters!"

Captain Lewis turned a little and said good-naturedly: "Less noise, boys!"

The light infantry company went on a few paces, then halted again for the twentieth time that morning.

It was while they were deployed and standing with grounded arms that they heard brisk firing in front of them. They stiffened as a body, and their eyes grew anxious. "Whup, cap'n, that might be the Injuns right now!" a front-line soldier said, and looked forward where the infantry front guard could be seen moving on again.

Once more they took up the slow march. They had proceeded to a natural meadow when a man in the first squad sang out excitedly: "Gemini, looky there!"

A riderless horse, its bridle-rein dragging, was bounding toward them in full flight. More cavalrymen were breaking through the wood, and behind them could be seen a mob of infantrymen who, having discarded their muskets, seemed bent on outrunning the disorganized cavalry. It all had the appearance of the beginning of a general rout.

Captain Lewis faced his company as shot rattled out from the pursuing Indians. The left flank, he saw, was wavering uncertainly; there were men staring with

horrified eyes at the fleeing soldiers who, mounted and afoot, were running directly for his own ranks.

The sight put a cold fury in him. He rasped out commands, breaking the company into sections. "Second section about face! At the trail . . . double quick time . . . march!" It was a dangerous business, he knew, and he cut around through the moving troops, facing them. When they were forty or more yards from the first section he called out: "Halt! About face and stand fast!" The men were cringing from the anticipated blow, but a sergeant was shouting, "Don't give way! Keep your ranks!" and Lewis had the grim satisfaction of seeing his first section standing fast.

The horsemen swerved from the waiting lines of the second section and went around, hoofs pounding. The retreating front guard of infantry struck and recoiled. Panting and confused, they excitedly fell in on the left flank of the second section at the sharp order of Captain Lewis.

"Second section forward!" shouted Lewis, and the men marched ahead at the trail. His company was rejoined and stood to face the oncoming enemy, who were flinging themselves to the counter-attack with a cry.

Within musket-shot of the Indians General Wayne sat his horse on a knoll, surrounded by his aides, Captains De Butt and T. Lewis, Lieutenant Harrison, and the adjutant-general, Major Mills. The enemy were firing rapidly, and Wayne could tell from the volume of sound that their forces were strongest in the front centre, which was opposite the company commanded by Howell Lewis. Shot was rattling out over a long line, or series of lines—he believed there were three—each

extending into the forest for more than a mile. He sat there quietly for some moments, waiting for the action to become clear, apparently oblivious of the fact that he was in any danger.

Young Harrison edged his horse nearer the flank of Wayne's mare. "General," he began hesitantly, "I'm afraid you'll get into this and forget to give me the field orders!"

"Perhaps I may," said Wayne crisply, keeping his eyes ahead, "and if I do, recollect that the standing order of the day is charge the damned rascals with the bayonet."

Shot was rattling out from both sides in terrific bursts. Wayne turned to young Lieutenant *Harrison*: "Find General Scott and send him around their right flank with every cavalryman he can muster!"

Lieutenant Harrison galloped off through the woods.

"De Butt!" Wayne called.

To the left the roar was growing louder.

Captain De Butt wheeled his horse nearer.

"Where's the Legion cavalry?"

"Back of us, sir, under Campbell."

"Tell him to go 'round our right flank through the bottoms and turn their left!"

Captain De Butt backed his horse and hurried to the rear.

A white-faced orderly broke through and gasped: "Colonel Hamtramck, sir, says to inform General Wayne they're *ahammerin' on our* left flank."

Wayne said shortly: "Tell Colonel Hamtramck to hold his front line ready for the charge."

Lieutenant Harrison returned. "General Scott's on his way roundabout, sir."

As if he had not heard, General Wayne ordered:

"Take word to Wilkinson to prepare his front line for the charge."

A musket-ball tore up the ground in front of Wayne's horse and her flanks began quivering.

While Captain Howell Lewis's company of light infantry were holding their place at the edge of the clearing through which the Indians were attempting a flank attack, a part of Captain Springer's battalion of riflemen were making their way through the woods. They had seen horses running loose among the trees, and had conjectured that as the front guard of cavalry had retreated there was nothing now between themselves and the enemy. They advanced slowly and cautiously, parting the underbrush and staring far ahead toward the sound of firing.

Like the Indians, they slipped from tree to tree. And as the musket-balls flew more thickly many of them went forward on their hands and knees. A corporal and a private, in advance of the rest, stopped and lay still, listening to noises, a muttering and a whimper.

"Think that's Injuns?" asked the private breathlessly.

The corporal shook his head; he could not tell.

As they waited another private crawled up and lay down behind the trunk of a walnut.

Bullets sped overhead. A little to the left there was a cry.

"By God!" said the corporal through nerveless lips, "be here till sundown if we don't take caution!" He stood up on shaky legs and stepped forward.

The private by his side encouraged himself with a shout and arose.

More riflemen from their battalion came up. They reeled ahead after the corporal.

A hundred paces farther they came upon the riddled company of Howell Lewis's, standing the Indian fire alone.

"Go after 'em!" screamed somebody.

The riflemen, joining Lewis's light infantry, surged through the clearing toward the Indians, who were so close that the color of the paint on their faces could be seen.

Captain Campbell, a dark, wiry man with high cheek-bones, in command of the dragoons, or Legion cavalry, sat his horse beside his second-in-command, Lieutenant Covington, at the head of his mounted troop. Moving at the right rear of the infantry, he had ordered a halt when the infantry stopped. Now he was waiting for whatever action was to take place.

Ahead of them and to the left they heard the sound of firing, and the men grew restive. Back of him Campbell could hear their comments:

"That's tol'able loud, that is."

"Hain't amovin' none either."

"Sho', an' us a standin' here like this! Tain't right. I'm fixed on fightin', I am." And the speaker ran his finger judiciously along the edge of his sabre-blade.

"Whoa there, Dolly! Stan' still, you ornery critter!"

"Cap'n, flies an' skeeters'll chaw us up if we don't move directly!"

Lieutenant Covington turned about in his saddle: "You'll move soon enough!" he promised.

The firing continued. The smell of gunpowder came to them on a breeze that blew from the northeast.

The hoofs of a swiftly ridden mare were heard at a

distance and Captain De Butt appeared. "Captain Campbell!"

"Yes, captain?"

"Orders from General Wayne to advance through the bottom-land and turn the enemy's left flank! You hear me?" He rode away.

"We heered him," called out a cavalryman.

"Draw sabres and forward!" called out Campbell, and led the way through the fringe of trees to the cleared slope by the river. They advanced at a gallop and in close formation.

Half a mile ahead they received their first shot. It came from a shallow trench dug at right angles with the rapids, and slightly protected by a hump of dirt, logs, and boughs. A ball ripped into Campbell's leg. He leaned over with his sabre swinging and shouted: "Forward!" In his mind the scene was clear: a mile of open ground, the forest to the left, the rapids to the right, and down at the foot of them loomed the British fortress. Under him the hoofs of his horse thudded madly on the soft earth, and he saw the Indians springing up out of the trench with musket, tomahawk, and war-club. He slashed out viciously, swinging the heavy sabre until it whistled. A daub of yellow paint that was an Indian's face swam before him and disappeared under the fore legs of his horse. He raised his weapon again, was about to bring it down when his arm lost all its power and his hand slipped out of the guard; simultaneously he felt a blow on his chest where a tomahawk had buried itself.

The horses trampled over his dead body.

"Forward!" yelled Lieutenant Covington. Behind him a soldier shouted a malediction and blew out the face of an Indian with his pistol. Covington's sabre

swung into a shoulder, came out with blood and flashed again, cutting a clean slice into the back of a fleeing Indian's neck.

On the knoll General Wayne ordered sharply: "Sound the charge!" And into the noise of shouts and musketry and the air thick with acrid gunpowder came the stirring bleat of the bugle, calling for the advance. All along the line that extended through wood and clearing for more than a mile officers were bellowing: "Front line, at the trail . . . fo-orward!" The string of infantry began to move, wriggling in and out among the trees with the motion of a long snake trying to crawl sideways.

Young George McDermott stood as a file-closer near the extreme right of Colonel Hamtramck's left wing. Earlier in the day, the scouts not engaging in the battle, he had tried to include himself in the ranks of Colonel Hamtramck's brigade as the men fell in for the march. He had joined himself first to one squad and then to another, but each time he was crowded out by the soldier whose place he had unconsciously tried to take. At last he was forced to march among the file-closers.

But when the front line moved to the call of the bugle he saw his chance and stepped between a weazened infantryman on his right and a sallow mountaineer whose jaw hung open dejectedly. Neither noticed him. They were staring beyond through the fringe of trees where there was a small meadow in the forest. George went ahead with them, stealing glances at them now and again to see if they were trembling as badly as he felt himself to be. He had never felt like this before, so scared and shaky and yet with such a

curious elation in his heart. It had come with the sound of the clearly trilling bugle that gave the charge. Before that he had listened with restlessness and anxiety to the clatter and rattle of musketry. But now that noise was no longer harrying his ears; it was as if he had grown used to it. Nor did he notice the fumes of the gunpowder which swayed in filmy wreaths among the trees as he followed the advance through the small meadow and into the forest again.

Suddenly he was aware of musket-balls clipping the leaves and furrowing the ground about him. They had a deadly singing which made him grit his teeth and try to tighten up his body in a vain effort to present a smaller target for them. He went ahead and it seemed as though each moment one would strike him. But all along the line he was aware of men trampling forward and he never thought of doing less than they would do on this day.

Farther in the forest lay the body of a dead horse and of a cavalryman pinned under it, his scalp taken off and his face red from the blood that had dripped down. A moment later there was a shout. Ahead George saw the great waste stretch of tangled timber, some trees uprooted and others broken off at the stumps. Behind these trees were heads and musket-barrels and arrows ready to be launched from tight-strung bows. Beside him the weazened infantryman went down, clutching at his musket as he fell. George wondered if he should not stop and pick him up. But it was too much like a fantastic dream, as if it had really never happened. He went forward with a feeling of nakedness, the musketry humming in his ears and the gunpowder stinging his face where rivulets of sweat ran down.

He began working his way through the clutter of fallen timber. Down the line somebody was shouting: "At 'em! at 'em, buckskins!" He went stumbling between the sprawling trees, the prickly vines in the underbrush ripping at his clothing. A few paces ahead was the dark, half-circle of an Indian's skull rising above a log. He brought his musket to his shoulder and fired; the head sank down. A moment later he passed it. The man had been already dead from another shot, it was obvious from his rigidity and the spot of dried rust on the chest of his leather shirt. George went on, sick with disgust.

A charge of shot volleyed forth and officers were making a tumult of orders among which could be heard:

"Close in!"

"Double quick!"

" . . . bayonets!"

Near by an infantryman jabbered, "You G-god-damn whelps, you wh-wh-wh—!" and went stumbling forward with outthrust bayonet through the clutter of timber.

Unexpectedly George broke out of the forest and stood in the natural meadow-land which was dotted all of the way to the British fort with the figures of Indians. As he stood there other soldiers appeared, their faces strained and white and their clothing torn. Though the fort was more than a mile away many of the infantrymen began running over the cleared ground in pursuit of them. George sat down and primed his musket afresh. His hands were unsteady and he was thinking of his father.

The sun was almost directly overhead when a small group of horsemen appeared from the forest and halted in the meadow-land, where they surveyed the British

fort. Looking up, George recognized General Wayne, two of his aides, and General Scott, who commanded the volunteer cavalry. General Scott was explaining how his men had made all possible speed to turn the right flank of the enemy but that by the time the cavalry had reached the designated point the Indians had already been driven back by the infantry.

To this explanation General Wayne gave but half of his attention. He was more interested in the British fort toward which the Indians were running. His forehead was wrinkled into an angry bulge above his eyes and he replied briefly to General Scott, obviously trying to discourage a longer recital. At length he broke in: "Harrison, look sharp and tell me if you can see any of the enemy going inside that fortress!"

Lieutenant Harrison stared for a time in silence. "No, they're not going in, General, at least it don't look that way. Seems like they're going around it."

Wayne cursed, "Damn their brass-bound, copper-bottomed effrontery! Establishing a fort within the well-known and acknowledged limits of the United States!"

General Scott looked at him questioningly. . . .

"Come, lieutenant," Wayne spoke brusquely to Harrison, "we'll rub a little dirt under their infernal noses."

General Wayne and his aide moved down the slope, parting from Scott and the other aide, who went slowly toward the river where the soldiers were gathering.

George turned heavily back through the forest. He had been uneasy at the sight of the fleeing Indians and now that General Wayne, collecting a bodyguard on the way, was riding down toward the British fort the whole scene of desolation came sharply to young George's mind: where in it was his father! That he had been in the council and that he would have been

somewhere about the battle was certain. Where had they all gone, Little Turtle, Blue Jacket, and the rest? Killed, wounded, running away? It was strange, that place of battle, now that the firing and excitement had ended. There were so many dead. They sprawled in hideous angularity as he ran back over the ground, choking with a sudden fright as it came to him that his father might have been killed.

In a panic he hurried through toward the fateful mass of fallen timber where the Indians had first been seen. There were many about, dead and dying. And the groans of the living sickened him as he went frantically from one to another.

A wounded soldier lay in front of him, his head propped against a tree. He was calling from lips that scarcely moved, "Water . . . water!" and lifted haggard eyes to George.

George felt of his canteen, shaking it. It was empty. "I'll fetch some," he promised, and the sweat stood out on his forehead at this new twist of events and his mouth trembled. It seemed he wouldn't be able to look for his father after all. Or else he would have to leave this man croaking for a drink. He ran ahead to the prone body of an infantryman and shook his canteen. Inside there was a wabbling sound and jerking the canteen loose he hurried back with it. The man raised thankful eyes and drank greedily.

"Take caution," George advised. "Too much is worse'n none!" He started away.

But the wounded soldier's eyes held him back. "Don't leave me, God, don't leave me. I'll die, sho'."

George glared angrily into the forest. To be held back like this when he had to find his father was unbearable. He couldn't do it. And yet he couldn't leave! Those

eyes of the wounded soldier would stay in his consciousness all of his life if he left him now. "Where you hit?" he asked and bent down.

"My guts," whispered the soldier and began drawing up his shirt.

"Don't," George commanded. He didn't want to see it, couldn't bear to. He had to find his father, and if he saw the wound he knew he would be powerless to leave.

"I git out afore it pizens . . .?" began the soldier tentatively.

George looked down at him. "Well," he said shortly. "I'll tote you on my back." He knelt down before the wounded man, biting at his lips that trembled because of his fear over his father. A battle! He hadn't known it would be like this.

XXI

ANGUS McDERMOTT had not fought that day. In fact, he, Little Turtle, and Blue Jacket, who commanded, had not expected that a battle would take place. For this they had a number of reasons.

Four days earlier, when they had returned Miller with the flag, they had sent General Wayne the message that if he waited at Fort Defiance for ten days they would decide whether they would be for peace or war. They did this, not in order to gain time to prepare themselves for fighting, but because Little Turtle and others wanted to make one last effort with the chieftains to arbitrate with Wayne and his army. Now Little Turtle was a brave man; he had been named war-chief of the Miamis for his deeds, but as he had watched Wayne coming up from Fort Greenville, always with his picket chain guarding against surprise and marching ahead with clear-eyed resolution, he had felt that to meet him in warfare would be useless and a criminal act toward the men he commanded. Moreover, when Wayne built his fortress in the heart of the Indian villages and fields, Little Turtle knew that if fighting came the crops would perish and his people go hungry through the long winter.

McDermott likewise had small hope of winning against Wayne's army. They numbered as great a force as the Indians could possibly muster from all of their tribes represented at the council. They were better equipped and ably commanded by a veteran officer who had distinguished himself by taking Stony Point with only the bayonet as a weapon, by holding Chadsford at

the battle of Brandywine, by his attack on Cornwallis at the James, by driving both British and Indians from the Georgia colony, and by his fighting at Germantown and Monmouth. But even more than that was McDermott influenced by the fact that George had gone. And as for Charity she had declared herself to be independent of him. George, in whom he had so much pride! Charity, the faithful, who had told him years ago in that sad, awesome intonation of hers that wherever he went and however long he was gone she would always be waiting for him to return. But now all was hopeless. But one spot of light glimmered through the all-embracing darkness: if Wayne would wait, another council could be called and peace might be effected.

But though Little Turtle, a number of lesser Miami chiefs, and McDermott were anxious for further parley, Blue Jacket, most of the other Shawanese, and the bulk of the Delawares were for war. The Shawanese carried in their hearts the blood feud which had existed between themselves and the Long Knives since the days of Dunmore's war, when they had been driven into the Ohio country there to live under sufferance of the Wyandots. They remembered how their chieftains had been slain and counted the long roll of generations of their dead for which they were bent on repaying these Long Knives in kind. And added to these were the Wyandots, remembering the massacre on the Muskingum years before.

No word came from General Wayne in reply to their request that ten days' grace be given. On the first morning after Miller had returned to Wayne with the message, the Indian spies reported that the army was making ready to move forward. And Blue Jacket ordered his own men into an ambush in the forest where it had

been devastated by a storm and where the fallen trees would afford the greatest protection. But that day passed and Wayne did not appear. The Indians, as was their custom when on the verge of battle, had eaten nothing the night before or in the morning following. The day passed and Wayne did not appear. Another night came and still the Indians waited.

Meanwhile Little Turtle, McDermott, and others had contrived to call a council. It met on the third night after Miller had departed with the message. About the fire lighted in that darkness were more than a dozen chiefs. Shortly after they had met Little Turtle addressed them.

Little Turtle spoke earnestly. After the peroration he said: "We have beaten the Long Knives twice, under separate commanders. It is the truth. But we cannot always expect the same good fortune. The Long Knives are now led by a chief who never sleeps. Night and day are alike to him. Through all his long march to our villages our young men have never been able to surprise him. It is not too late to listen to his offer of peace. Hearken to it well! It may save us our hunting-grounds. Beware lest in endeavoring to keep all we should lose all!" He strode about in the firelight, chanting his plea that General Wayne be reconciled before it was too late. At last he sat down.

Little Turtle had no sooner resumed his seat on his blanket than Manato, a young chief of the Shawanese, jumped up and said craftily: "The Little Turtle is growing old! Nearly fifty summers and fifty winters he has seen! His blood may be cool and his arm no longer mighty! But that is not true of the young chiefs. Their blood is warm and many grandfathers look down on them to be avenged against the Long Knives. Let the

brave men stay to defeat the Long Knives! Let the cowards run!" Manato's full lips curved and he stared triumphantly about him.

Little Turtle winced, knotted his fists, and remained silent.

Blue Jacket nodded solemnly.

In praise of Manato's speech Bockongahelas intoned: "It is the truth, the very truth Manato speaks!"

Mournfully, Little Turtle arose. Further pleading was useless. He said in a steadfast voice: "I lead my young men to the battle."

The council broke up.

That was on the night before General Wayne's attack and he was still some miles distant. Morning came and as there was no sight of him the braves concluded that they would be safe in cooking breakfast. The front line went to their posts in a long stretch at right angles with the rapids, there to wait in the fallen timber. The men who were to form the two support lines cooked up provisions while the squaws and their families trailed up the river to the woods behind the British fort.

McDermott had not spoken at the council. For he knew that if he had, once Little Turtle had failed, he would have been looked on as a traitor and his words would have passed unheeded. The promised aid of more than two hundred volunteers from the British under Captain Caldwell had come and they were ready to go into action; it was too late for McDermott to face about.

He felt that sharply, and the poignant loneliness that went with it. George and Charity were separated from him and the world was empty. As the sun rose toward midday on the morning of the attack he left the camp and went down by the river between the

forest and the foot of the rapids near the looming British fort. Sitting on the bank, he could do no more than stare wofully down at the bright water splashing and tumbling over the vari-colored rocks.

It was while he sat there that he heard the staccato of musketry sounding from the forest down the river to the southwest, a ragged round of shot followed by a silence that seemed to be drawing out interminably. He listened, speculating vaguely as to whether it had been fired by the Indians or by Wayne's army. Probably the Indians, he thought, for the shot would be still more scattered if it came from advancing troops.

The silence puzzled him. It could not be possible that Wayne's troops would be routed, yet there was no further evidence of conflict. He watched the forest edge incuriously. Strange that there was so long a stillness.

Unexpectedly from the depths of the forest there broke forth an exultant crackling. The noise seemed to be stationary for a while, then drew nearer. And looking up the slope of bottom-land toward the tree-tops he could see a gray wraith of smoke hanging irresolutely above the trees. Now it was a pitched battle, he decided.

As he watched he saw three Indians break through the edge of the woods, looking furtively behind them as they stepped into the tall grass of the prairie. One had a musket, but the other two had abandoned all but their side-arms. The firing was coming closer, he could tell by the sound of it.

Young George! Would he be in it? Like the headstrong boy he was, running off like that, always talking about his own folks. As if one set of people weren't like any other! He for his part had always got along

wherever he had been; and Colonel Elliott, now, there was a right good man! Of course the British weren't his people; he had never thought they were. But who were his people? That was the point he could not find. When he had left the Virginia country it was governed through Lord Dunmore by his majesty, King George. And then there had been some rebels—he didn't even know their names or what they looked like. There hadn't been many at first, but then after a while it seemed as if everybody, not only in the Virginia country, but in Pennsylvania and the Carolinas and in those countries to the north and by the sea, had become rebels! And then there were no rebels at all, all the rebels had set up a government of their own—the United States of America.

More Indians were appearing on the prairie, some of them in full flight, as if they had a long way to go and little time in which to get there. McDermott looked down to the British fort, wondering what the commandant, Major Campbell, would be up to now that the Indians were running. And he thought that Campbell would be mustering his troops to their places and waiting for Wayne's army to break through and draw up on the prairie. There would be a wide swath of devastation then, he calculated. For Major Campbell had four nine-pounders, two howitzers, and some smaller guns mounted inside his fortress.

He turned from the fortress and looked up the bottom-lands along the river. There was a dark mêlée of cavalry riding low in their saddles, he judged, cutting and slashing at the Indians' right flank. All he could see was a whirling mass and an occasional gleam as a sabre swung, reflecting the glint of the sun. Blue Jacket would be somewhere in there, fighting man to man with

his braves as he always did. A stout man, Blue Jacket, but a headstrong fool, and his pride high because the British had given him a high officer's commission and sent two of his boys to school across the water—the big water.

From the edge of the forest stepped a familiar Indian figure in warrior dress. Even from that distance McDermott could see that he moved in pain, all drawn up on one side. As the man came closer he recognized Bockongahelas. Must be a general rout if Bockongahelas was running away; that warrior scarcely got out of the way of anything, McDermott told himself.

Another round of shot crackled in the forest and balls went spinning through the light, mid-morning air. They must be very near, that army. McDermott lifted his hand to Bockongahelas, but Bockongahelas only shook his head in a slow, heart-broken sort of way.

A great gathering of Indians momentarily debouched from the forest, leaping for cover into the tall prairie-grass. Back of them McDermott saw a ragged, hesitant soldier of the Legion.

They were coming swiftly now, Wayne's army, and the firing sounded only in small, isolated bursts through the forest. Cavalrymen and infantrymen alike were coming, the one from among the trees and the others up from the bottom-lands. But McDermott scarcely cared whether they came or not. Slowly, without thought of cowardice or personal danger, he got up and walked toward the British fort, expecting that at any moment the guns would rumble forth their shot over the breastworks, now that Wayne's army was massing in the prairie.

By the fort the remnant of Blue Jacket's command were gathering. And seeing them McDermott thought

automatically that some one, Captain Caldwell or Major Campbell, would step forth and form them to meet the enemy. They stood outside, milling about, and it seemed to McDermott as if this uncertainty of theirs was but a prelude to a new formation and that soon the guns would be barking.

But as he drew nearer he discovered the reason why the Indians were waiting outside the fort and making no effort at order. For there were British redcoats with bayonets at the gate and the sergeant who commanded them was shouting angrily to the Indians: "Get out, you rascals! You can't come in! Get out, get out!" And the Indians, confused by this change of face on the part of the British in the fort, were trying desperately to push their way inside.

McDermott stared in bewilderment. A sharp pain cut through him. He could hear the sergeant's high-pitched voice, but the words were unbelievable. The British were there to help; they had promised the Indians support not only in keeping the ground on which they now lived but also in winning back all of the country west and north of the Ohio from the settlers. And yet at this crucial time the guns were silent and the bayonets were sharply pointed against the breasts of those who had fled there for security! McDermott's mind could not take it in. The thing was too sudden and unanticipated. But he felt the treachery in his heart, as strongly as if it had been directed against himself. As in a sense it was. Those long journeys, the parleys that led to the forming of the confederacy; all had gone for nothing, there was no more hope. The confederacy was dead and could never be reborn. For a moment he stood there with his shoulders slumped dejectedly forward. Ahead of him the Indians were still clamorous

about the unyielding fortress; behind him Wayne's army was coming on, scattering shot before them. He turned down toward the river where a canoe lay hidden among the drooping willows. Not that it mattered greatly, but he could stay there no longer. Walking quickly, he stepped along the overhanging willow trunk and dropped into the bark vessel; the paddle dipped and the bow shot down the rapids toward the opposite bank.

Departing from that prairie between the desolate forest and the ominously quiet fort broke the pattern of his life completely. He was leaving Little Turtle, his friend, and the British garrison which he had trusted, but trusted no longer. With young George gone and Charity turned away from him, life had been heavy, but he had endured it, helped by the crisis attendant upon General Wayne's approach. But now there was nothing for him. He had no place.

As the canoe slipped into the shallow water by the east bank, McDermott rose slowly and landed, his mind going back to Charity. Always before she had been at the threshold to greet him. But now the cabin would be bare and cheerless. But even if it weren't there would be a small chance of his getting to it, surrounded as it would be by all of Wayne's men roaming and foraging through the bottom-lands.

He had no place. There was a queasiness in his stomach and numbness everywhere else as he thought of it. And suddenly he sat down in the tall grass and stared diagonally across the river. The fort stood alone in the midst of the prairie sweep. To the north the Indians were running and to the south Wayne's cavalry and infantry were gathering in ranks. He saw officers lifting their arms, calling the men together, while in the

foreground between the main body of troops and the fort there rode a few dozen horsemen. They were headed slowly for the fort. He watched with a mild interest. Was there to be a parley? But no flag rose above the advancing cavalcade. It was a curious, dare-devil thing for whoever commanded the horsemen to do. At any moment there might be cannonading which would turn them all into rags and bones and fetid flesh. But on the riders came, not stopping until they had gotten within less than shouting distance of the British garrison. Then they began an insolent circling of Major Campbell's guns, obviously inspecting the walls and mounted artillery. Meanwhile no shot was fired, and after a while the riders turned back to the main body of the army.

McDermott rubbed thoughfully at the fringe of gray hair back of his ear. He felt warmed with admiration for the men who had ridden so calmly and scornfully beneath the muzzles of the British nine-pounders. And then the recollection of his own position came to him. He was without home or country; young George had gone over to Wayne's army and Charity had left him, was probably in the fort which Wayne had built on the point of land which stretched out into the mingling waters of the Maumee and Grand Glaize. He had no place to go. All of the Indians, except those who had been either killed or captured, had streamed on past Major Campbell's garrison and were joining their families down the Maumee, where the river widened into the bay. And now that the end had come there was no place for McDermott with them, nor with the British either, since they had used their bayonets to prevent the Indians from finding protection with them.

He stood up sadly, feeling older than his years.

Across the river he could see parties going forth with flaming brands, evidently to destroy the corn still in the husks and the gardens on whose produce the Miamis depended greatly for their living through the winter.

That was what they were doing; he could see the smudge of smoke rising from the tall yellow stalks. He knew it was only a foretaste of what would happen, that the troops would burn all of the planted bottom-lands to ashes on both sides of the river for a space of fifty miles. His own cabin, it too would go, and the bark huts and tents of the Miamis and Delawares as well.

He could not stay there any longer, yet he had no other place to go. If only he had Charity and young George again he would, his jogging thoughts concluded, take them farther into the wilderness and there, perhaps near Kekinoggay, where the Miami council fires burned, he would find a stretch of fertile bottom-land and build a cabin and make a clearing, as young George had always wanted him to do. Young George could make things grow, there was no doubt of that. He himself could keep a larger family than his own in game. But he was a fool, he told himself sourly, to think of that now. It was too late. To see young George and Charity except as a prisoner was impossible; and likely as not they would refuse to come even if he were enabled to talk to them.

And yet, curiously enough, he felt no guilt, no resentment or fear toward that huge body of men on the other side of the river. Except for chance he might have been with them, like Simon Kenton, who was always grumbling and saying "What and the hell" to everything and was known wherever there were pioneers as one of

the best scouts that ever wore buckskin. He might have been with Simon had it not been for his journey to Detroit for Lord Dunmore and his service for Colonel Elliott as an interpreter. . . . How time passed! It seemed more like twenty weeks than twenty years since he had first parted the underbrush on the east bank of the Maumee and had asked that Indian what river it was that flowed before him. "Omee" the Indian had said and had helped McDermott over to the other side. And though not knowing any of the country he had found his way up to Detroit without any trouble. It seemed odd, he reflected, but it was probably where he now stood that he had first come upon this river in the wilderness that was to become the scene in which he passed his best years. And then the news that there were rebels fighting. Even now he could not understand how it was that the rebels had come to control the whole country, or what had become of the rebels since then. For nobody ever spoke of them any more; they simply called them Americans.

Across the river the soldiers had burned everything made by man's hands within a stone's throw of the fort and were now returning. And from the other direction a few wagons with kettles and supplies were slowly approaching. From all of this it was apparent to McDermott that the army would camp there that night under Major Campbell's guns. He wondered what would come of it, whether there would be a fight. And at the thought of it a shiver writhed up his spine, for he found himself wishing that there would be a fight and that he could join in, clawing up those bristling walls in an attack on the redcoat regulars and the loaded nine-pounders! Merely thinking of it made him exultant.

That feeling lasted but a short time; up the river a company of soldiers had discovered a ford and were crossing. Unwilling to face them for fear of being taken prisoner, McDermott shouldered his musket and stepped quietly into the wood. He had no wish to meet a foraging party.

He went through the forest toward the southwest, parallel with the river. There were straggling soldiers and small details over all the ground that stretched the forty-odd miles between Major Campbell's fort at the foot of the rapids and General Wayne's stronghold up at the fork of the Maumee and Grand Glaize, but he was willing to take the risk of being caught by them in order to see his cabin once more. He could, he realized, go directly north to Detroit and beyond, and there find security. But he didn't want to go to Detroit; he wanted to remain where he was. And so long as Charity and young George were in the vicinity he would stay there even though he would be unable to see them.

Night came and he made his camp in the depths of the forest, near a familiar swamp which no soldier would ever penetrate. Even after the sun had disappeared the atmosphere was hot and there was no need for a fire. In the darkness he lay down with his musket beside him and thought of Charity. Her safety concerned him greatly; and lying there, looking up at the warm August stars that blinked down among the leaves, he knew that he would have to see her soon no matter what the consequences to himself. Not that he had taken good care of her during their life together; he hadn't and he was aware of it, but he was also aware of what she and young George meant to him.

He saw the dawn of another day. Waking early, he

walked toward the river; he was not far from the cabin and he hoped that he might find a means to cross before the foraging soldiers were stirring. But when he broke through the underbrush near the bottom-lands he saw soldiers tramping watchfully along the bank and he turned back, being not yet ready to face them.

That afternoon there was a sudden rumble of cannonading near the foot of the rapids. It drew him toward it. Though no other firing was heard, he continued in the direction of Wayne's encampment and it was not until he reached a point opposite the rapids that he realized the report had been a salute of Wayne's small howitzers to the Legion's troops who had fallen in the attack. From where he stood he could see the freshly dug mounds of earth in two long rows on the prairie.

On the next day the army moved. McDermott kept even with them as they marched back to Camp Deposit where they had left their baggage and where the wounded had been taken. Himself unseen, he waited until he was satisfied that they were returning to Fort Defiance. Then he pushed on.

Burning of fields and the Indian huts continued on both sides of the river and from the bottom-lands there was a continuous haze of drifting smoke. His own cabin lay in the direct line of the army's march. McDermott reached a thicket on the bank opposite it the night after the army had taken up the march with their baggage and wounded. There he made his bed until the morning.

Dawn showed the cabin across the river, standing on the rise above the corn-fields, the door closed and no smoke rising from the chimney. The army, he knew, would pass there that day and in concealment he

watched for them to come, his instinct being to guard this building which he had reared with his own hands. What he would do when the soldiers came with their brands of flame he did not know. Throughout the day he sat with his jaws shut grimly and his loaded musket lying across his knees.

It was late afternoon when the army began straggling past, the cavalry slowly in the lead and the infantry following; more than an hour passed before he saw the rear-guard approaching the cabin. They came up through the fields and bark huts of the Buzzard family of Miamis, trampling the grain and leaving bright tongues of fire on the dried stalks which the west wind blew into a conflagration. A screen of smoke rolled over the bottom-lands and hung above the river.

McDermott stared intently from the thicket in which he was hidden. By the cabin a man of the rear-guard stopped. McDermott saw the pale nimbus that surrounded the torch which he held in his hand. If that torch . . . ! McDermott moistened his dry lips and took a firmer hold on his musket.

More men came up. They stood there a few moments in what appeared to be a consultation, then moved on, leaving the field and cabin untouched.

McDermott breathed out sharply, swept not only by relief but by a painful gratitude. For, now that he had been spared, this unexpected consideration moved him profoundly. No matter why they had favored his cabin, the fact that they had was a sign that they held young George and Charity to be of their people. And though it made him feel that his family was even more inaccessible to him than they had been, he could not help being thankful that the cabin had been preserved.

The last of the soldiers disappeared and McDermott

followed on down the river toward the fort where they would camp that night. For if Charity was not in the cabin she must be in the fort, he thought. And keeping out of sight of the men on the opposite bank he moved forward to a point across from the fort, making his camp there for the night.

From the east shore of the Grand Glaize McDermott saw the four corner blockhouses rising above the deep wall of fagots outside of which a chain of sentries were already patrolling their posts. Wary as ever, Wayne had prepared himself against surprise. Darkness fell as McDermott waited; the fort and sentries were blotted from his sight and after a while there was only to be seen the faint glimmering of the water between himself and the west bank of the Maumee.

As he waited through the night, thinking about Charity and young George, it came to him that it was not right that they should be held away from him when there was no reason for it. They had nothing to fear from the Indians, and in any event if they were endangered he could look out for them. There was no telling what would happen if they remained over there. Wayne might persuade young George to stay with his army when they recrossed the Ohio and Charity might go along. As to their fate a host of conjectures presented themselves to his mind and he determined that he must see them. Undeterred by thoughts of the way in which he would be received, he decided he would cross the river in the morning. The canoes of the Indians, which they had hidden at the news of Wayne's approach, were still back in the thicket where they had carried them.

He pushed out in the early dawn, his steadfast eyes set toward the wall below which the sentries were

slowly pacing. He had no handkerchief, no white cloth of any kind that he could use as a flag; whether they shot at him or not would have to be left to chance. His forehead wrinkled with irritation as he drove the paddle into the water. Already, two sentries had met and were watching him.

The bark went silently over the surface of the water, the paddle making scarcely a sound as it slipped in and out. Skimming the bow up to the muddy shore, he picked up his musket and stepped over the side. The sentries were coming to meet him with fixed bayonets.

"Halt!"

He stopped and surveyed them calmly.

They scanned him closely, seeing moccasins, leather leggings, hunting-shirt, and squirrelskin cap and not knowing what to make of it. A man dressed like that and crossing from the wilderness over to the fort. And one of them, the taller and lankier, moved the brush of black whiskers that straggled down his chin to inquire: "Y'ain't one of them volunteers?"

McDermott observed briefly: "I'll tell your officer who I am."

"Will if you git that fur," he was informed significantly.

The sentry with the straggling whiskers turned and shouted, "Corpril!" and after a moment a stocky non-com appeared from the gate by the nearest blockhouse. He rubbed his eyes as he walked slowly toward them.

"I ast this critter where he's from an' he ups with, 'I'll tell yore officer'; what you reckon we better do with him?"

The corporal yawned and answered sleepily: "I'll take him."

McDermott followed him inside the gate. As they

entered the stockade square the corporal asked: "Who you lookin' fur?"

"Well," began McDermott, "I'm lookin' for my family."

The corporal widened his eyes. "Law, man, ain't no family in these parts." He stared at him curiously. "Where you from?"

McDermott pointed northward along the Maumee. "My cabin's four mile down the river."

The corporal's mouth opened with astonishment. "You hain't—you hain't McDermott?" He leaned forward as if to see the better.

McDermott nodded impatiently. "I'm here for my boy and his mother."

"Well now," the corporal twisted his knuckle-joints until they cracked, "so you're McDermott! You don't look a mite fierce!" He inspected McDermott thoughtfully, "come fur your folks, hey? Well, they was here, but I dunno now." He cracked his knuckles again. "Mind to go into the guard-house an' set till the camp bestirs itself? They'd sure be sleepin' now."

McDermott followed him into the blockhouse, where a number of soldiers lay sleeping on the floor. Outwardly calm, he sat down on a bench and took out his pipe.

Time passed. A bugle sounded, startling him. The soldiers slept on. A little later a captain came in and looked sternly about the blockhouse. "Where's McDermott!" he called out.

McDermott removed his pipe from his mouth, said, "I'm him," and continued smoking.

"Just you stay there," advised the captain sharply; "General Wayne'll want to see you."

"I'll be on hand," McDermott answered grimly.

Posting a sentry before the blockhouse door, the officer went out.

McDermott sat listening to the sounds of the waking camp, wondering how long it would be before he saw George and Charity and what he would say to them when he did see them, speculating on whether they would return with him if Wayne allowed him to go. For it was in Wayne's power to keep him prisoner.

Not long afterward the officer returned for him and took him to General Wayne's quarters, one of a row of log buildings that faced the picket-line between the two blockhouses above the Auglaize banks.

An orderly said, "General's awaitin' fur you, cap'n," and they went inside. Beyond the threshold McDermott saw a man of about his own years, with light bold eyes, a straight mouth, and a sharp, tanned face which at that moment had a scowl of perplexity. The captain saluted; "Yes, sir," he said and went out the door. The two men were left alone.

In a crystal silence they looked at each other, these two men who had both been born in the same colony and at about the same time, but who had travelled such different paths. They looked, and it was as if everything that needed to be said had been spoken by their eyes, as if each understood the other.

At last Wayne said: "Well, here you are, McDermott."

"Here I am," McDermott echoed slowly.

"Been a long spell since you stood up before an American officer, eh, McDermott?"

"Well now," responded McDermott thoughtfully, "you say it thataway—I reckon it's the first time."

Wayne nodded. "You left while we were still the colonies?"

"I left even afore there was any rebels. Leastways I never seen any."

Wayne smiled grimly. "Been rebels a long spell back, McDermott; it took rebels to make the Continental army. But they're all in the nation now."

McDermott nodded heavily, remaining silent. There was, it seemed, room in the nation for everybody but himself. He looked up, for General Wayne was speaking again: "How did our inveterate enemy take the turn of the battle? I rode up to their fort to provoke their guns, but got only a flag out of it." There was harsh amusement in Wayne's voice.

"Wouldn't fight, would they?" said McDermott. Bitterly he remembered the sight of the redcoats standing at the gate with their bayonets and ordering the Indians on.

"Indians still believe in them, do they?" asked Wayne.

"Not no more," said McDermott quickly and added, "they've fought their last battle in the Ohio country."

"Think they have?" Wayne clasped his hands in back of him. "I had hopes there would be another one, while I've got my men on the field to drub them well." He looked at McDermott closely. "Tell 'em that, will you?"

McDermott said, suddenly restless: "It's that boy of mine an' his mother I want to see."

Wayne lifted his eyebrows. "They left here last night; if they ain't in your cabin I'll send out a searching party."

McDermott hesitantly moved toward the door.

"Let me know if they're not there," said Wayne.

McDermott studied him intently. "You give me leave? I kin go, kin I?"

Wayne said: "You're here of your own free will?"

McDermott answered: "Reckon so."

"Do you want to be held for a court-martial?"

"I want to go to my cabin," burst out McDermott; "I've run my last for them lyin' folks down the river; now I aim to go to my cabin."

Wayne looked at him coolly. "Who is there to stop you?"

McDermott stared at the floor a moment; when he looked up he was grinning. "General, ain't a mortal in all creation could stop me if you cain't."

Wayne sat down before the general order he had been writing. "Go 'long," he commanded.

XXII

THE day was still young when McDermott left the fort. Down on the Maumee the sunshine lay warmly on the glistening water. He passed the sentries without a word and pushed the canoe toward midstream, climbing over the curving stern and taking up the paddle. His strokes were quiet and vigorous; the slender bark sped out to the sound of wavelets slapping against the sides. As he neared the ruffled surface where the currents of the two rivers became one, he turned his head for a moment, hearing a bugle bleating with a silvery timbre. And looking backward he saw a brightly colored flag go flaunting upward on a pole that rose amid the brilliant leafage of the forest. The sound of the notes, the sight of the gently stirring cloth raised high seemed to penetrate into his body, stirring him. The flag of the people whom he had left so long ago was floating there in the wilderness above the Grand Glaize. But it was a new flag and a new people that carried it. Not soldiers under his majesty King George; not colonials, not rebels or even continentals, but Americans. American, it came to him, was a big word, embracing the Carolinians, the Pennsylvanians, the Virginians, and the people between the Alleghanies and the sea, a word spacious enough to denominate himself, who had never before had a word fitted to him. Born a Pennsylvanian, by environment a Seneca, by service a man of Dunmore's and Colonel Elliott's, he was now an American.

The bow of the canoe wavered in the swift current, but a strong oar held it fast. Facing ahead again McDermott paddled steadily down between those desolate

banks where the torches of Wayne's men had charred the bottom-lands, leaving only a darkened stubble of corn where the fields had been, and heaps of ashes where the Miamis had built their dwellings. But his own cabin had been spared! It gave him a feeling of guilt and sorrow that his own things should have been saved while those of Little Turtle and the others were destroyed.

But that had been because of young George and Charity. And his thoughts, never far from those two, now grew deeply anxious. They were back in the cabin; he was glad of that, but of what were they thinking? Likely as not they would have but little use for him. Those years of neglect in which Charity had silently gone through the hardships of the wilderness! And young George always wanting to go back to his own folk and never having the chance. Well, they were independent of him now; they could do as they liked, those two, and he could not blame them. And as the canoe slipped on down the water he felt old, and as if he would like to lie down and sleep a long, deep sleep. For there would be no life of his own without Charity and young George; it was how they would greet him that made him fearful and weary.

The canoe rounded the bend in the river and went on. McDermott paddled steadily, his eyes staring urgently ahead and toward the left bank where he would soon see the cabin. Charity and young George would be having their breakfast; what would they say, how would they look when they saw him! Perhaps they were making ready to leave the cabin, to follow Wayne back to the Carolina country. He drove the paddle with a desperation almost beyond his control, so great was his desire to set his doubts at rest.

Now he could see the smoke from the chimney curling upward in the morning sky above a clump of maples. And continuing along the curving bank he came within sight of the cabin. There it stood; on the rise above the corn-field, a beam of sunshine lying aslant the open door. Slowly he paddled across the current, sending the bow brushing against the willows that overhung the inlet where the pirogue had been fastened when he and Charity had come from the stockade at Detroit. As he stepped to the bank and drew up the canoe he felt old again; his steps dragged hesitantly, taking him up the hill through the corn.

Near the door he could hear George's voice, pitched in the soothing monotone that was so reminiscent of Charity, but the words were indistinguishable.

He stepped noiselessly to the threshold. George and Charity sat close together by the table, the son leaning toward his mother, who remained silent. He could see her partly averted head bent forward.

"Well," said McDermott. Effort to control his anxiety harshened his voice.

George looked up and laughed with shaky jubilance. "If that ain't what I said!" he exclaimed to his mother.

Charity turned a pallid face, ringed darkly. She moved her lips and his name came forth in a whisper. Rising slowly, she held out her fingers to touch him, querying with sharp disbelief: "You're back?"

He smiled thinly, "It's me, Char'ty!" and watched gloomily for the sign of affection for which he dared not hope.

"Course it's him," said young George impatiently; "ain't I been asayin' all along he'd come?" He couldn't understand why they stood like that, staring at each other with such alarm. His father had returned; his

own relief was great, but why didn't they go on with breakfast?

Charity mournfully shook her head. "It's been so long; *every night I seen you alayin' in the forest, shot down and no mortal to help you!*" Her lips trembled and she stepped toward him.

He held his arm about her and grimly regarded the cabin wall, afraid to admit the fact that they were together again. It was so much more than he deserved; if he looked down he was sure to find that the pressure of her head against his breast was only an illusion. He remained rigid and silent.

Young George called out sternly, "Here's your coffee!" and set the pot on the table. There had been enough demonstration between his parents; now that each was reassured of the well-being of the other they might better be returning to the ordinary ways of life instead of standing there with their arms about each other.

Charity turned her face from her husband's shoulder and smiled at George. "Cain't you let two folks alone when it's been so long a spell since they've parted?"

Angus relaxed and gazed longingly down at her.

George said, "Well, he's here now, ain't he?" and addressed his father. "Coffee don't stay warm all day." Their attitude embarrassed and confused him.

They broke away from each other and sat down at the table.

George said: "Reckon the fightin's over now."

Angus nodded, watching George uneasily as he asked: "You still with the army?"

George laughed: "What'ld I stay with it fur?"

His father answered hesitantly: "Thought you might jine Wayne agin when he went down acrost the Ohio."

"So I might," said young George, "if I warn't set on stayin' here."

"M . . . !" His father looked at him.

Charity put her elbows on the table and explained: "General Wayne says they's heaps of settlers jist apinin' to come out here from acrost the Ohio, an' they'll come now if the Indians stop their 'tarnal fightin'."

George added: "General says all the good land's gone back there an't ain't so good there as 'tis here nohow. Says he's right struck with it here. Says all a man has to do is stretch out his hand an' he kin have more provender'n he knows what to do with."

Angus inclined his head, drinking the cup of coffee. "It's the place to settle." After a moment's silence he went on, glancing about the small cabin: "Might be handy for George if we had a leanto on here."

Charity looked at him hopefully: "You done with your traipsin'?"

He did not answer at once, but sat thinking of the broken confederacy, of the turnabout of the British fort, of Charity's loneliness and his own wasted years. Nodding heavily he replied: "I've done my traipsin'."

Charity sighed happily, saying: "Well, I knowed you would some day."

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